



KURRAM MILITIA

1892-2014



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Kurram Militia as Turi Militia was raised in the last decade of nineteenth century, and was the third such outfit after Khyber Rifles & Zhob Militia although the causes of raising of each one is different from other. Turi Militia was raised at Balaishkhel which is almost thirty kilometres east of present day Para Chinar on 18th October 1892 under Captain C.M.Dallas, with Lieutenant Ross Keepel as the adjutant¹, it shifted to present location very next year,. In 1902 it was transitioned into Kurram Militia which is still in use. Third Afghan War of 1919 was a test of the Kurram Militia in which it performed admirably again it rose to occasion during 1930 disturbances, however it was the Kashmir War of 1947-1948 which is the golden chapter of Kurram militia, it was decorated with Sitara –e-Jurat and Tamgha –e-Jurat, which are one of the highest gallantry awards of Pakistan Army. Kurram Militia also took active participation in the 1965 & 1971 wars apart from regular service in internal security duties. Afghan issue has been an integral part of Kurram militia and during the Russian invasion of Afghanistan it was the eye of the storm, over half a million Afghan refugees entered the valley and in 1986 a small but deadly skirmish took place at Kasaha in which six scouts of Kurram Militia were decorated with gallantry awards. Since the beginning of war against militancy Kurram Militia is an active member of Operation Al-Mizan. The internal security of the agency is precarious due to persistent riots between the Shia and Sunni sects and it is the foremost duty of Kurram militia to maintain peace and order in the valley, every Muhararm is a test of nerves for the commandants of Kurram Militia.

Kurram Valley

Kurram valley is an old civilisation, mentioned in Rig Veda as Kurrmu, it is known after the principal river of the same name which runs for almost 70 miles bisecting the valley, in a north-south direction before it turns into a south westerly direction at Thall² and enters into the plains of north Waziristan Agency and is join by the Kaitu River. Thus Kurram Valley is the area between the Thall in the south to the semi-circular mountain range of Safeed Koh in the north in which Sikaram is the highest peak {15620 feet}. Valley is regarded by many as the most beautiful and scenic among all the valleys of North Western Frontier Province NWFP or present day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa {KPK}. It ascends or descends in a gradual manner with Parachinar the headquarters of the agency in far north having an elevation of 5750 feet and Thall at 2150 feet.

Kurram's history is bland, it comes into lime light with the rise of Mahmood of Ghazna in 1000 AD and since then it has been mentioned by few historians till the arrival of the British and the Afghan wars which took place between them in 19th and twenty century³. Nothing can be said with certainty about the inhabitants of the valley, and it is this uncertainty about the origin which has been and still is the apple of discord and the main cause of violence in the

¹ London Gazette, dated

² Thall in Pashtu means a point where the river bends due to mountain.

³ Kurram Gazetter, 1944, unpublished, draft copy with Kurram militia, commandant at Parachinar.

scenic valley. Aryan migration which took place 2000 years BC and around whom our history takes birth took place along the rivers flowing from north to south and from west to east or in simple words with the flow of water downwards. Initial Aryans settled around the fertile valleys and were subsequently pushed downwards by the subsequent wave of nomadic herds and tribes, also the weather hardships compelled them to move further down to moderate plains in winter and coming back to higher, cooler place in summer. Population was scarce, In 1998 census the population of valley was half a million and it is logic to assume that two thousand years ago it was not more than few thousands. Major tribes which inhabit the valley are Turi, Bangash, Mengal, Para Chamkani, Muqbal, and Zadgran but it is Turi and Bangash around which the history of this valley revolves around. All the tribes in the valley speak same language {Pashtu} adheres to same religion {Islam} and follows the same code of conduct as is known as Pakhtunwali {code of Pathans}.

History of all the Pathan tribes invariably starts with the birth of Islam and the subsequent conquest of Persia and Central Asia by the Arabs and Islamic military power starting from 650 AD. Not that, these tribes were not present before the Islam but religion is the bloodline and pride of these Pathans, they in classic tribal pride tends to align themselves with the heroes of Islamic history to have a niche for themselves among each other. For example, Afridi , a major tribe which inhabits Khyber which lies to the east of Kurram and is linked through the rugged passes claims to have embraced Islam at Mecca where a delegation of their went , at Ali Masjid which is a stronghold of Afridi Tribe almost mid of Peshawar and Landi Kotal, a boulder is attributed to be thrown by the fourth Caliph Hazrat Ali himself while on a campaign in Khyber, historically there is no proof of great caliph ever coming to this part of the world but such is the faith and pride that it is seldom challenge or debated with Afridis. Similarly, Bangash claims to have a direct lineage with the Hazrat Khalid Bin Waleed the most illustrious companion of Prophet {pbuh}.

Islamic forces which marched upward and northwards from Persia , conquering the present day Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and it was at River Oxus that they defeated the combined forces of Turk and Chinese which established an Islamic kingdom which is still existing in one form or the other and like so many other empires had its share of rise and fall but these Muslims of Central Asia did not allowed any other religion either to prosper or to take birth among themselves which defies the fundamental teachings of Islam. Tribes embraced Islam, joined the Islamic army and waged wars against the infidels. Kabul was under the rule of Hindushahi when Islamic forces took it in 655 AD, it exchanged hands and went out of Islamic sphere, Ghazna was brought under control in 870 AD, the expansion of Ghaznavites slave Turk rulers started with Pirin repulsing the attack of Kafir forces of India in 974 AD, in 988 his successor Sabuktegin defeated Jaipal at Laghman. Kurram Valley emerges onto the pages of history in 1215 AD when taj ud din Yaldiz of Ghor was appointed as governor of the area which was known as Kurman, Kurram valley was his stronghold⁴, for next century the area witness the historical currents with Mongols calling the shots in the rest of India, however the Kurman and Banian {Bannu} retained partial independence. Moghul came onto the face with Babur of Fergana raiding the Banian in 1505. It is but logical to perceive that these upper

⁴ Provincial gazetter NWFP. 1905, p-15.

layers of Kurram Valley which leads the forces towards Kabul and vice versa were not affected, the caravans were moving along the Kurram and so were the forces, among them many settled here for the reason that it has everything which civilisation needs to prosper, fresh water, fertile land, abundance of wild life and sport, thick forests and healthy environments. Above all Kurram Valley provides an access to the Peshawar Vale, Kabul or passage towards the Central Asia through rugged but not inhospitable passes through Tirah.

The changed political scenario at the Arabia also affected these tribes, thus after the righteous reign of four caliphs, Islam, politically was divided into two major camps, one which were more aligned with the fourth caliph, Hazrat Ali and his sons and other who were not that loyal to him. Tragedy of Kerbela in which the grandson of Prophet {pbuh} and son of Ali was treacherously killed by the caliph Yazid, is still haunting the unity of all Muslims, ummah was now divided along the lines of Sunni and Shia. All Pathan tribes are Sunni Muslims with one exception, Turi, who are Shias. The difference between these two factions or sects is too minor to be even written, it is passage and current of history that orators, writers and religious preachers started broadening and widening these purely political differences into religious manifestos; nowhere in frontier or even in world it is as dangerous and obvious as in Kurram Valley. Thus history of Kurram Valley is web around Turi a Shia tribe and Bangash and other tribes who are Sunni.

Early history of Kurram, although not empirical in nature is still linked to some extent with early history of India, the coins found in the valley do have Greek inscriptions, and however no written or physical structure validates this. Geography and fertility of the land on the other hand is the major evidence of its rich past; it is very much possible that Eudamos the last of Greek rulers and murderer of Porus might have opted for this route while going out of India in 300 BC; no rock inscription of Asoka has been discovered so far neither any ancient tribe with ancient rites or custom as in Kafiristan exists.

None is certain about the tribes embracing the Shia ideology but historians do generally consider the comeback of Humayun who later became emperor of India, he was able to regain the throne after his asylum and material support from Persia in 1550 AD. Later history of Moghuls had a far reaching impact on Kurram valley, the adjoining eastern mountains revolted against the Moghuls with religious movement Roshiana which started in 1586, having a stronghold in Tirah Valley among the Afridi and Orakzai tribes; many a Moghul forces were massacred by the adherents of Roshiana. Emperor Aurangzeb himself was compelled to march to Hasanabdal to counter the threat and he resolved it diplomatically; Aurangzeb is known in history for his strong anti-Shia sentiments for which he carried out many campaigns as well in southern part of India. The next wave of Persian invaders started with Nadir Shah in 1737 and continued with Ahmed Shah Abdali who laid the foundation of modern Afghanistan. Ranjeet Singh with the turn of century {1800 AD} emerged on the scene and by 1834, Kohat was captured but Afghan governor was allowed to retain the seat with paying allegiance and revenue to Khalsa Darbar.

Anglo –Afghan Wars & Kurram Valley

The first two Anglo-Afghan wars between 1840-1879 left an everlasting impression on the present history of Kurram valley, this valley was not used by the rival forces during the first round but the results of first war soon resulted in the disintegration of Sikh empire and resultantly the British took over the administrative control of all the Sikh territories which included Bannu, Peshawar and Kohat as well. Kurram remained an independent valley with Turis in command of upper valley and Bangash in the lower part of valley down to the Kohat, it should be kept in mind that Bangash were the ruling elite at Kohat. Like all tribes, the Turis were also fond of raiding the settled areas for war booty and also for seasonal migration; this soon resulted in their coming face to face with new administrators at Kohat who took punitive expeditions against them to protect the settled areas. By this time there were friendly and co-operative relations among the British and Afghan rulers, the desire of British, to have more control of Afghans on these warring Turis and other mountainous tribes resulted in Kabul sending governors to Kurram valley with headquarters at Kirman not far from present day Parachinar, these rulers were harsh and the taxes levied on the natives were high which resulted in a resentment by the natives; Kabul remained as the main power broker and trade which was being carried out with India through little but still passed through the Kurram along with the Khyber route which was an all-weather pass. Sardar Muhammad Azim Khan, brother of Amir Sher Ali ruled Kurram as the governor from 1848- 1864 when he was replaced by Sardar Yahya Khan and a year later he was replaced by Sardar Ibrahim Khan, son of Amir Sher Ali and in next three years till 1868 there were four more governors including a Ghilzi, all other were Barakzai, it was only Sardar Wali Mahmood Khan, brother of Sher Ali who was able to restore some kind of normalcy in the valley as he ruled with iron fist from 1868-1876, before the signing of Treaty of Gandamak, Sardar Shahbaz Khan who was the nephew of Amir Sher Ali, held the appointment as the last governor of Kurram valley.

The second Anglo-Afghan War of 1878-79 saw the emergence of Kurram as a strategic valley to the British. Lord Roberts carried out his march through the Kurram, using Drewaza Pass, Peiwar Kotal and Kharlachi route in overcoming the feeble Afghan resistance. Khost and Matun two of major Afghan towns adjacent to Kurram valley were occupied and later evacuated by Lord Roberts. Turis having suffered under the Afghan rule were more than willing to extend a happy hand to the British and thus developed a good relationship among these two, Bangash also were on board in this campaign against the Afghans with the British.

The period between the second Anglo-Afghan war and signing of Durand Line in 1893 is of great interest and importance in the history of Kurram Valley. Afghans lost all control over the Kurram after the Treaty of **Gandamak**, for all practical purpose Kurram especially the Turis were left at their own. In the absence of any central authority the tribal feuds not only nurtured but also flourished to an extent that there was an anarchy in the valley. It should not be confused with the civil war of any kind but just inter-clan fighting, at times among the Turis themselves at other with adjoining tribes over water, pasturing, grazing and to some extent involving religious sentiments. From 1800 onwards the religious movements in India especially in north western India took a militant shape, Syed Ahmed Shaheed and his followers waged a religious war against the Sikh and later against the British, which was mainly confined

towards the east of Peshawar and Kurram valley remained aloof. From 1860 onwards British themselves were aware of the increasing threat from Russia in what is termed as the Great Game and Forward Policy and Kurram Valley stands out as the pivot of that posture from British point of view, yet no concrete steps were taken as in far north in Gilgit or in Chitral or for that matter in Khyber where a local militia was raised in 1878 as Khyber Jezailchis to protect the vital line of communication; Khyber Pass.

It is difficult to imagine that how the people of valley, numbering not more than fifty thousand became aware of the rising power of British in the absence of any media yet from 1890 onwards the Turis the last of the tribes in frontier approached the British authorities at Kohat and agreeing to come under their protectorate which finally resulted in 1892 in having British governor or administrator in the valley. Main cause seems to be the constant fighting and the defensive fallibility on part of Turis from the other tribes; what is more important that the militia was raised in a territory which was still part of Afghanistan, it was not yet declared a part of British India but Kabul for all practical purpose lost the claim to Kurram valley. The Durand Line, and the agreement is regarded as the most important diplomatic agreement of nineteenth century, officially culminated all links of Kabul with Kurram and put the valley under British sphere resulting in the formation of a political agency.

Turi Militia 1892-1902

It was raised at Balaishkhel which is 30 kilometres east of Parachinar and close to Sadda the former seat of Afghan governors, it also marks the boundary between the Shia and Sunni tribes of the valley, it is a flash point where tribal wars are still going on over the disputed territories with last gun fight taking place in February 2013 taking two lives. A small fort was constructed but in 1894 the militia was shifted to Parachinar which was the headquarters of the newly formed agency also keeping the political and military wings together.

Turi Militia was initially entirely comprised of Turi and Shia Bangash tribe, it had the black flag as the regimental colour with two swords of Turis in a crossed manner as the emblem. At Parachinar, a fort was constructed and 3918 kanals of land was procured from the natives for the cantonment. The first major issue was the water supply for this cantonment, water was purchased from Zadgran tribe, the 1894 pact or agreement allowed the cantonment to have water four days a week from morning till evening, one clause highlighted the fact that no irrigation will be carried out in the cantonment with this water. Commandant was allowed to have the water from 0800-1200 hours, four days a week and similar arrangements were made for the lines, this lasted till 1903 when fresh agreements were reached for the cultivation of land.

Men were all from the upper valley mostly from Shalozan, Kharlachi, Parachinar, and adjoining villages. Militia main role was to act an iron hand of the political administration, two battalions were raised, of equal strength, one meant for defence against the afghan incursion and other for the internal security.

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The only worth mentioning feat of Turi Militia before it was transitioned into two separate battalions was a campaign under the command of political agent and commandant Ross Kepple along with 22nd Punjab regiment made a successful assault on the Para Chamkanis; in 1899. The back ground of the campaign dates back to September 1897. Orakzais, Chamkanis and Mussozais joined hands and planned to attack Parachinar and Sadda. First, the Kurram Militia Balish Khel post, near Sadda, which was held by 20 men was attacked. The fierce attack was successfully repulsed. On hearing about incidents at Sadda, a flying column was despatched from Thall under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Abbots to relieve Sadda. a detachment of 200 militiamen also arrived at Hasan Ali. This combined force repulsed the attack of about 2000 Mussozais on 16th September 1897. Despite failing in their

attacks the three tribes remained defiant till another mobile column which had men of Kurram Militia also, under Lieutenant Colonel W. Hill arrived from Sadda into Khurmana defile and one column from Bagh in Tirah. These two columns, after some efforts, succeeded in getting the submission of Orakzais, Chamkanis and Mussozais.

Thus in 1899, Chamkanis again began serious troubles and raided certain villages. Captain Roose Keppel, ex Adjutant of Kurram Militia and officer on special duty in Kurram took the counter measures and raided Chamkani village of Haji Khel and Mirza Khel in Kirman Sara with a lashkar of 700 men.

Kurram Militia

On raising in 1902, Kurram Militia had thirteen companies having a strength of 1332 infantry soldiers, 53 men in the role of mounted infantry with four British officers in command, it was divided into two wings Right and Left Wing, out of which Turis had nine and Khattak had two companies comprising of Barak and Saghri clans and two companies which had Sunni Bangash also. Clerical staff comprised entirely of Hindu clerks, **the very first Muslim clerk was Ahmed Ali who was honoured with knighthood in 1945 by the King**. Recruitment was an uphill task not due to lack of interested candidates rather due to more appearing. In 1910, Afghan boundary commission arrived through Kharlachi, Kurram Militia gave them a ceremonial parade and entertained them

The **class composition** underwent transition in 1912 when a reorganisation was carried out under which Sunni Bangash were disbanded and two companies of Kuki Khel Afridi were inducted. On the eve of First Great War the strength of Kurram Militia was 1349 infantry soldiers, 53 mounted infantry and being commanded by six British officers.

Mangals were inducted in 1915, they replaced the Khattak, only one company was enlisted, rest of Khattak also bid farewell to the Kurram Militia in 1919 when they were transferred to the North and South Waziristan Militia, it occurred just before the outbreak of the Third Afghan War, however the Khattak were reenlisted in the Kurram Militia with one company only in 1919, when it was raised in lieu of Turis.

Third Afghan War - 1919

In May 1919, the Third Afghan War broke out, situation in Kurram was quite different to that in Chitral and Khyber, where the Afghans could not make any headway and were soon pushed back into Afghanistan. The salient of Kurram Valley is approximately 100 Kilometres and bulges into Afghanistan, thus geographically it looks quite indefensible. It is bounded by Afghanistan in the West and North, to the East are the tribes of Orakzais and Zaimukhts, and to the South are Wazir. Kurram Militia had undergone one major change just prior to the outbreak of this attack, the strength of mounted infantry which had remained almost unchanged since its raising in 1892 was now doubled, it had 164 men in mounted infantry role, furthermore one company of Buda Khel was enlisted, previously they were being enlisted and included with Turis, also one company of Khattak was also raised in place of Turi.

The whole force in the Upper Kurram was commanded by Brigadier General A.E. Fagan and Kurram Militia. According to Fagan's plan, Kurram Militia was to watch the likely invasion routes along the Peiwar Kotal, located about 22 Kilometres West, north west of Parachinar, or along the Kurram river via Kharlachi about 17 Kilometres south west of Parachinar and was to deal with minor incursions, while the regular troops were to be held in reserve at Parachinar. During the first three weeks of the war nothing happened, except that the Militia grabbed sixty cattle heads owned by the Afghans.

On 22nd May 1919, Afghan General, Nadir Khan had surrounded Thall and isolated the Kurram Valley, the Afghan Army, strongly supported by 9000 strong Mangal Lashkar and a large Khostwal Lashkar came down the southern slopes of Safeed Koh Mountain Range to move on to the village Peiwar and Shalozan. Thus a column commanded by Lieutenant Colonel T.J. Willans, a former adjutant of Kurram Militia, with 57th Wildes {9 FF}, one section of mountain artillery and squadron of 37th Lancer, immediately move from Thall. William's column furnished their own piquets in the Lower Kurram, they covered a distance of 56 miles from Thall – Parachinar in 49 hours; later further reinforcements arrived in the form of more regular troops

Till June, the brunt of the Afghan offensive was entirely borne by Kurram Militia. During early stages of the war, Kurram Militia detachments at Chapri, Kharlachi, Laka Tiga, Ali Mangal and Badama were occasionally isolated and subjected to attacks but the troops of Kurram Militia held them on by sheer dint of bravery and courage. The attack on Badama was carried out by a lashkar of Orakzai on the morning of 29th May, the post itself was held by a company of Kurram Militia {102 men} under command Subedar Gul Khan ; who not only defended the post but later attacked the lashkar driving them back; leaving behind their twenty casualties also.

In June 1919, one company of Wilde's under command Captain W.D. Francis reinforced Kurram Militia at Ali Mangal, later the remainder of Wilde's and section of artillery arrived and occupied Palmer's Ridge and Gobanza heights; relieving the Kurram Militia. The strength of the regular troops was not more than 450 who arrived at Peiwar Kotal '*opposed by only a weak regular army battalion, the Afghans, who were in great strength, made⁵ no further incursions but contended themselves with lighting a string of forest fires along Peiwar Ridge, blowing bugles and shouting throughout night*'.⁶

With the arrival of regular troops, Kurram Militia was relieved of defending the Peiwar, now set its eyes on the offensive and resultantly on 3rd June, Afghan Fort at Kharalchi was captured⁷. Attack was launched by Major Dodd, initially Afghan Post at Amir Thana was overrun, one company of Kurram Militia with entire strength of its mounted infantry supported by a company of Guides, two troops of Lancers and two mountain guns took part in this dawn attack. The entire column had move from Parachinar after last light on 2nd June. The last action for Kurram Militia was on 30th July 1919, {nearly two month after the Armistice at

⁶ *Noteworthy Operations & Incidents, Kurram Militia*, Kurram Militia Archives, Parachinar.

⁷ Major {r} Nawaz, *The Guardians of The Frontier, Frontier Corps*, 1995, pp, 105-107.

Rawalpindi}Badama Fort was again threatened by a combined lashkar of tribes notably Orakzai and Zaimukht, the notable incident of this particular attack was the shooting down of Royal Air Force {RAF} aircraft by the tribesmen and the resultant race between them and the Kurram militia to rescue the pilot and observer, Kurram Militia was able to safely bring back the crew to the fort, both pilots were injured and had to be carried on shoulders; had they been captured by the tribesmen, their fate is not difficult to guess.

The commander in chief praised the Kurram Militia with glowing tribute, *‘through the whole period of operations the behaviour of this corps has been deserving of the highest praise’*⁸.

Kurram Militia’s role and efficiency in the Afghan War was outstanding when it is compared with other similar militia outfits. The North & South Waziristan Militia along with Khyber Rifles were almost disbanded {Khyber Rifle was disbanded and re-raised in 1944}, mass defections took place in the other militia, officers were shot⁹ and ammunition taken away by the scouts in these outfits, thus a question generally arises that why Kurram Militia remained intact; answer is in the demographic layout of the valley and the class composition of the militia.

Mounted Infantry

Mounted Infantry was a regular infantry only mounted on horses, they were not Cavalry. Their strength varied but generally remained 64, they had equal number of horses but Sowars were usually ten less than the horses. One veterinary assistant surgeon, one compounder were part of the outfit. It had three sections of Turi and one section comprising of Sunnis. Sowars were armed with rifle and fifty rounds of ammunition but these soldiers were not allowed to carry bayonets, the junior commissioned officer had a pistol with 24 rounds of ammunition, Ferrier was also authorised a rifle with fifty rounds but signallers were ordered not to carry any rifle or bayonet. Enlistment in Mounted Infantry was voluntary and open to all classes, Commandant himself used to select the men, all interested men were required to have completed their basic infantry training before being considered for the mounted infantry, all were required to be first class shot and physically fit and above all not to have more than five years of service before being inducted in this elite category of militia. Training was spread over three months of equitation and horsemanship; leave was not granted other than on emergency grounds to the riders during training. Promotion within MI was on the basis of tribe and a junior could cross over a senior of his tribe, if the senior is not good enough in MI. Their pay was better than the regular infantry and so was the leave privileges. Kurram militia was working on silladari system.

Mounted Infantry was directly under the command of commandant.

⁸ Kurram Militia, Lieutenant Colonel Salam, Commandant. *Defence Journal*, Volume XVIII, 1992.

⁹ *North Waziristan Militia & Tochi Scouts*, Aamir Cheema, p- also Charles Devereux *Frontier Scouts*

Posts, Forts & Piquet

In the early years of KM, ten forts were constructed at Teri Mangal, Kharlachi, Lakka Tigga to guard against the afghan incursion where as Wuchadarra and Shakardarra were in the north east mainly to check the incursion of Para Chamkani tribe; these were largest of the outposts, Duma Khawara was the largest of the outpost and Sultan Kot were established on both banks of Khurmania river, they were erected to look after the most dangerous approach leading to the Massozai, Ali Sherzai and Para Chamkani areas. Chappri, Alizai and Arawali were constructed to maintain the peace and order and above all to secure the line of communication from Thall onwards to Parachinar, temporary posts were also established at Ibrahimzai and Hasasn Zai. With the passage of time these posts were altered and modified, in some cases these were removed also. These included Wachadarra, for which a fort was constructed at Mano Sam at an elevation of 8000 feet, north of old post; performing the old task, which was to keep an eye on Para Chamkani tribe. Shakardarra, Sultan Kot, Ibrahim Zai and Hasan Ali were evacuated, the last three posts were replaced with one single fort at Badama, which is almost at the mouth of Khurman gorge. It was one of the most important fort as it checks the main artery into Tirah and Duma Khawara {Sadda}. In the north Ali Mangal piquet was built to reinforce the Peiwar Kotal. To reinforce Chappri, lower and upper Manduri forts were constructed.

In July 1921, three sepoy from Kurram Militia were killed in an ambush near Arawali, thus a punitive action was taken against the villages of Tinduh and Jalamai, which were almost destroyed. In the same year in October, Kurram Militia sent a wing {300 bayonets} to support the regular troops in an action against the Wazir village of Charkhanai.

In 1930, the uprising at Peshawar due to Red shirts resulted in 204 men from Kurram Militia being sent to the city on duty, for almost all of these men it was their first trip to the provincial capital. In the same year operations were undertaken against the Massuzai and Khnoi Khel lashkars at Badama, against Chamkannis at Manosam, in Peiwar against the Mangals and Jajis were tackled near Kharlachi. In all these operations Militia sustained 34 casualties, {eight died, twenty four wounded}. As a token of appreciation, Viceroy granted one month additional pay to all ranks and also conferred three Indian Order of Merit, seven Distinguished Medal and two Sanads with one hundred rupees award.

The life in the valley remained peaceful in the turbulent decade which started with the uprising at Waziristan by Fakir of Ipi, there were few minor issues which traditionally are settled by Brampta, one such Brampta was carried out in 1934 against the Torobo Ghilzai at Turki Mela. In 1942 and again in 1944, platoons were sent to the Tochi Scouts to reinforce the counter insurgency operation against the Fakir of Ipi, the very first detachment of Kurram Militia comprising of six platoons was ambushed at Chashmai Bridge near Miranshah on 1st August 1942. Kurram Militia managed to break out from the ambush and in the ensuing fire, ten hostiles were killed and eight rifles were also captured. In another incident a mail loory was ambushed on Thall- Parachinar Road by a gang of Wazir, Chigha party of Kurram Militia was sent from Chappri and Manduri which not only recovered the loot but also apprehended the gang along with eight rifles.

Great War{1939-1945} brought the stark reality of German invasion into the frontier through Kurram river approach, similar actions were taken in Tochi Valley also. As a first step, temporary camps were established at Zakka Sar ridge facing the Afghanistan on the right bank of Kurram river, similar camp was established on the left bank at Manzala ridge, another camp was at Buto Khel on the border of North Waziristan Agency, at Shabak which is five miles south west of Manduri towards the Batai Pass on Afghan border these works were completed by the end of 1943 and temporary camps were abolished lest Manzala which was converted into a permanent camp occupied by the Kurram Militia although the site itself is outside the boundaries of the agency. Two additional temporary platoons composed of one platoon Mangal, half platoon Sunni Bangash, quarter platoon Zadran and quarter platoon of Para Sunni and Shia were raised as part of Northern Command Defence Plan in 1940, In 1941, three additional platoons of Turi were also raised under the same plan.

By the end of 1944, Kurram Militia was well established and apart from Turis had Mangals, Zadgran, Budda Khels, Sunni Bangash, Para Chamkani, Muqbals, Kharotis, Alisherzai, were enrolled at different time period, all these tribes are inhabitant of the valley. Tribes from outside the Kurram valley who were enlisted were Sunni Bangash from Kohat, Khattak, Afridi and Mahsud. However on the eve of new year 1945, only Mahsud were retained in the Kurram Militia who were not habitant of the valley.

Pay and allowances were generous in Kurram Militia, they were being paid from the political agent's fund, it brought prosperity in the valley. Sepoy was getting rupees 15 per month, havildar rupees 24/, jemadar{ naib subedar} rupees 60/, subedar who were commanding the companies were getting rupees 110/, and subedar major was getting a handsome salary of rupees 250/, per month along with free ration, uniform was on payment for which a monthly cutting was made known as half mounting. Pension was entitled after eighteen years of service payment which ranged from rupees six for a naik to rupees ten for a havildar, subedar was entitled rupees 20 per month. One month leave was also given with pay to all non-commissioned ranks. The main achievement of the Kurram Militia was in fostering the bond among all tribes of the valley and diminishing the sectarian hatred. It brought awareness of modern amenities among the tribes, a 62 bed hospital was established at Para Chinar to provide free medical treatment to them and their families, living quarters were made and natives along with their families started getting used to the modern life including electricity which was introduced in the Parachinar in 1928-29.

Band and Bugles Platoon, was an important segment of Kurram Militia, the band platoon was headed by a Surnai Major who was usually a naik or lance naik, there was one Dhol major also and ten sepoy acted and performed as bandsmen, one Bugle major and two buglers completed the outfit. Buglers after five years of service in the band were allowed to be transferred to a rifle wing; that was mostly for promotion purpose.

Independence 1947

On independence, Kurram Militia had a strength of 1632 men in infantry role, 64 as mounted infantry and there were six officers. There was a considerable numbers of Hindus and Sikhs in the valley {2467¹⁰} and they were safely evacuated by the Kurram Militia. The crisis after independence were varied in nature, there was a War of Liberation in Kashmir and there was unrest along the Afghan border. Six platoons were sent to the Kashmir under command Captain Mand Ali Khan. Initially they were on the offensive but later they were employed on defensive role in Chakoti area; where they fought valiantly, Subedar Akbar Khan Mangal was decorated with Sitara-e- Jurat , posthumously and Havildar Syed Abdullah Jan turi with Tamgha –e- Jurat.

In 1950, the situation on along Afghan border became tense, Subedar Eid Akbar was on gasht with his platoon of twenty five men when they were attacked by the Afghans near Kharlachi, in the end Afghans suffered three casualties whereas **Subedar Eid Akbar** embraced shahadat and was decorated with Sitara Basalat . In 1952, trouble erupted between the Turis of Kunj Alizai and Muqbals of Cozgarhi, issue was cutting of wood ; it was brought under control by the Kurram Militia without any loss to life, however Matasangar Post was occupied by own militia. Tarkha agitation started in 1954 when political agent was stoned by the agitators and militia had to be called in support of political administration, fire was opened on the crowd which suffered few casualties but in the end situation was brought under control. Jemaadr Khewa Gul Muqbal is a legend in Kurram Militia history , for his famous ambush which he laid upon the sniping Khani Khel tribe in Badama area. For many weeks the tribe was harassing the post when Gul decided to lay an ambush on them. ‘ this brought the whole of Khani Khel tribe to their knees and no trouble afterwards’.

Boys Company was sanctioned prior to the independence{ April 1947} to induct young boys of 12-15 years of age, provide them education and training and then induct them in the militia. 28 educational instructors were sanctioned for this purpose, initially fifty boys were enrolled along with 13 instructors, and it started its mission in April 1947, after independence the project remained in vogue till early sixties.

Kurram Militia-1958

In 1956, Pakistan became a republic, the strength of Kurram Militia was 2159 all ranks having seven officers, seventeen subedars, 38 jemadars, 85 havildars, 92 naiks, 1709 sepoy, 144 non combatants, 16 ministerial establishment and there were 50 boys as part of boys company. The corps was organised into Left & right wings, strength of mounted infantry remained as 64, there were four temporary platoons also. All in all there were 34 platoons, turi had 21 platoons, Buda Khel had two, {it included Shia Alisianis also}, three platoon sof Mangal, one platoon of Zadran, Sunni Bangash had two platoons, one platoon which was termed as mixed platoon had Muqbil, Kharoti, Para Chamkani, Alisanis, Manatwal, Alisherzai, Wattazai, Jajis and Ghilzai tribesmen, and two platoons of Barark Khattak.

¹⁰ Kurram Gazetter, 1944.

In mounted infantry there was one platoon of Turi and others, it had four sections, Boys company had also same composition of Turi and others . Both wings identical organisation, each having three companies, each company had five platoons of three section each; Headquarters Wing also had three companies, i.e. support, administration & training, one troop of mounted infantry of four sections. Companies were commanded by subedar { 1st grade } with another subedar { grade 2nd } as second in command, platoons were commanded by jemadars, in mounted infantry Risaldar was the commander with a jemadar as troop commander. Companies were numbered as A, B, C , D, E, F with platoons numbered as D1, A3 F 5, so on.

Officers all on secondment from regular army, were supposed and bound to know every hill, nullah and path way in the valley and secondly to be in close and friendly touch with local tribes and the Maliks.¹¹ Apart from Commandant who was a lieutenant colonel, his second in command a major who also commanded the headquarters wing, one adjutant, one as quartermaster, two wing commanders and only one as wing officer, the organisation surprisingly had no authorisation of officer for second wing. One officer had to perform as Duty Officer for the whole month. They were authorised one month Privilege Leave, a casual leave of ten days and depending upon the health a sick leave , however in case the sick leave exceeds four months than officer was reverted back to army. The accommodation was much better at Kurram than at most of other FC corps, the overall environment more open and liberal, education of children was an issue which still persists.

Firepower was in form of four guns which were on loan, integral machine gun platoon, it had seven sections. Originally Kurram Militia had only four machine guns which were increased to 12 in 1944 and later in 1955, two more were sanctioned; again majority of these machine guns were on loan, another dilemma was that no authorised strength was sanctioned thus all manpower was on attachments from wings. Platoon was organised into seven sections, each having two machine guns. Strength of each section was eleven soldiers commanded by a non-commissioned officer, each gun was allowed five thousand rounds per year. Mortars were another potent weapon but again no sanctioned strength, Kurram Militia had eleven Three Inch Mortars till 1969, when reorganisation took place. Mortar Platoon had five sections with a manning strength of eight soldiers in each section.

Drill has remained a hallmark of all Frontier Corps units, it was important to instill discipline in the temperamentally free mind and soul of enlisted tribesmen, Kurram Militia had 16 drill instructors and standards of drill were quite good .

Uniform

In Kurram Militia, uniform was same as in other corps , consisting of Beret Khaki, Mazri shirt, Belt leather brown, Khaki Drill shorts and trousers, hosetops of black colour, grey socks with tops folded down to four fingers and foot wear was brown chappies in summer. In winter, only change was in having woollen jersey, grey shirts and serge trousers. Officers were allowed to wear peak field service cap while outside the Kurram Militia area of responsibility.

Uniform of officers and men was identical except in terms of headgear. For gashting the dress was almost same, additional items were water bottle, haversack, bandolier brown, , Partoog Mazri and cap comforter in winter; in summer shorts were allowed. Mounted

¹¹ Section VI-Officers, Kurram Militia , Standing Orders.

infantry had the same dress except that they were allowed to wear breeches Jodhpur on ceremonial and in riding school. Guards at night were not allowed to wear shorts.

Ceremonial dress was almost identical, however Khaki Paggri with red Kullah which should be domed without any badge of corps on pagri, medals or medal ribbon were not allowed on jersey, leather belt with two pouches was the winter ceremonial dress where as in summer only difference was in wearing the shorts.

Indo-Pak War 1965

In May 1965, Kurram Militia was given standby orders to move for an operational role out of the present location. Subsequently, a contingent of four companies with supporting arms were despatched to Azad Kashmir under the command of Major Malik Shahzada Khan. These companies were placed under command various Azad Kashmir Battalions. The war itself officially started on 6th September, but before this intense operations and support was being provided to the freedom fighters by the people and military of Pakistan, an artillery duel was taking place between the Pakistan and India on regular basis, own positions also came under artillery, mortar and machine gun firing & shelling. Kurram Militia was entrusted to dominate the no-man's area and to keep the enemy under pressure and this they did admirably. Naib Subedar Hussain Gul successfully led a patrol to Burji and disarmed the mines while Naib Subedar Naimat Ali led a successful raid on the enemy post at Yandhor Gali. From 24th August onwards the tempo of battlefield started increasing '*Stubborn fight of Naik Noor Hussain with Bren Gun detachment at Danna, Subedar Ghulab Hussain's platoon with Lance Naik Gula Khan creating terror among the enemy at Pir Sahaba will always be remembered*'.¹²

Subedar Ghulab Hussain along with his platoon kept on fighting for a day without any support, their wireless communication had broken down due to enemy artillery shelling; they were later reinforced by the detachment of 5 Punjab Regiment. One company of Kurram Militia was employed at Sanjol where it came under heavy and accurate shelling, maximum casualties of Kurram Militia occurred at this point. Subedar Raza Khan Zadgran was also mentioned in despatches for his bravery and tactical acumen. It is worth mentioning that sixty men of Zadgran tribe under Haji Salimak Khan also took part in this campaign voluntarily, other notable men of the tribe included Pairat Khan, Zorawar Khan and Din Bazi.

Six soldiers of Kurram Militia embraced shahadat and sixteen other were wounded along with two junior commissioned officers, one soldier who was wounded, was taken as prisoner of war and was repatriated in 1966.

On September 6, 1965, at the outbreak of war, all the companies of Kurram Militia took part in action along with Azad Kashmir battalions. The contingent of Kurram Militia returned to Parachinar on March 21, 1966. Subedar Major Said Afzal, Subedar Ghulam

¹² *Official History of Kurram Militia*, p-14. Parachinar Archives.

Hussain, Lance Naik Gula Khan and Sepoy Mir Hassan Khan were awarded President's Sanads with cash khillat of Rupees. 200/ each for their bravery and undaunted courage¹³.

Kurram Militia 1966-1971

Kurram Militia contingent returned to Parachinar from the operational area on 23 March 1966, the city was decorated with colourful buntings and practically the whole route was lined with natives, children shook hands with these Ghazis. Sarfraz Ali Shah the political agent arranged a reception for them. The period between these two wars was of peace and relaxation. Training was given highest importance especially the physical fitness. Captain Abdul Qadir along with five soldiers climbed to the top of Sikaram on 19th June 1966, although the height as compare to the peaks in northern areas is not grand yet it created a news within the valley, flag of Kurram militia was hoisted at the peak.

Annual inter wing sports competition are of historical value, these two wings have a very intense rivalry in every field thus the annual competition held in August 1966 {22-27 August} generated a very healthy spirit. As the luck would have it both wings scored equal points and as such the trophy was given to both for a period of six month each; this was the last sports competition of Captain Murad Khan Nayayr who was performing the duties of adjutant and was promoted in May 1966 to the rank of major, he was later posted out to headquarters frontier Corps as the very first DAA & QMG. Next year in 1967, No.1 Wing was able to win the trophy by one point which reflects the intensity of the competition. Kurram tribal Cultural Festival was another high point of the valley. It was organised under the political administration in which teams from Thall and Kohat also used to participate, it was a two day affair, in 1966, it was held between 18-20 September. Football final was played between the Kurram militia and Pakistan Air Force, Kohat and Basketball between the Kurram Militia and Tochi Scouts, amazingly both ended in a draw, where as one can understand the draw in football but in basketball it is rare but it happened; mainly due to Captain Farruk Sayyar's last second score, in football the home team owe much to the skill of Captain Humayun Khan Bangash who scored the equaliser. In 1967 the Jashn-e- Baharan was held at Parachinar from 6th September -9th September 'according to professional Jashn goers', it was one of the most interesting jashn'.¹⁴ Events like fancy dress, football, pagal gymkhana were all new and colourful additions. Basketball was won by the Thall scouts, football final again ended in a draw between the Khyber rifles and PAF Kohat.

Shooting is hallmark of a good scout, in Kurram Militia it was mandatory that no one will be promoted or given extension of service neither the individual will be put in a promotion cadre unless he achieves the laid down standards in firing. In the end it paid the dividends when Lance Naik missed the best firer award in the Frontier week by mere one point; he stood second. Another feature of training was the 28 miles endurance test between two wings. No.1 Wing was being commanded by Major Arbab Hamid and No.2 Wing was under command Major Mir Nawaz , however in his absence it was led by Major Iftikhar; in the end it was No.1 Wing

¹³ *Frontier Corps News Letter*, 1966, p- 10.

¹⁴ *Frontier Corps*, newsletter, 1967, p-5.

which won the day, similarly the same wing all competitions in inter wing competitions less basketball.

Some of the old timers like Subedar Major Said Afzal Turi, Subedars Ali Marjan Turi, Ali Marjan Sunni Bangash, Badshah Hussain Turi, Ghulam Manatwal, Hussain Ghulam Turi Subedar Akbar Jan, Naib Subedars Hussain Gul, Rehmat Hussain, Wahab Ali and Faqir Ali bid farewell to arms after a distinguished service. Sharif Hussain, Abdul Hussain, Ali Akbar, Ghulam Nabi and Sarwar Ali were promoted to the ranks of naib subedar. Subedar Hussain Shah was given an IGFC commendation card for his meritorious service as education and wing senior junior commissioned officer. Subedar Major Said Afzal was awarded with Tamgha Khidmat{TK-11} on his retirement in 1966 for his meritorious and spotless career in Kurram Militia.

A major army formation exercise was held at Parachinar in September 1966 which was witnessed by Lieutenant General Abdul Hamid Khan, it terminated on 14th September. Within the valley, law and order remained within the limits with minor Baramptas, on 12th June 1966 and again on 18th June were carried out and two men allegedly involved in murder were apprehended. Muhararm remained an Achilles Heel and in June 1966, additional nine platoons from Thall Scouts were attached with Kurram Militia for the maintenance of law and order in the valley. Similarly anti powindah camps duties were taken over from Thall Scouts in November 1966.

In 1967, Frontier Corps, underwent an reorganisation in which the composition of the standard wing was changed from three companies to being four companies; Kurarm Militia also readjusted the manpower in line with the directive, one positive impact was the creation of new vacancies for the subedars thus it now allowed the qaums to have their share in the additional promotions. In 1968, a family wing was added to the Scouts hospital at Parachinar. Commandant Lieutenant Colonel Ghulam Dastgir underwent a personal tragedy when Mrs Dastgir took her last breath on 14th December 1967. The standard organisation of Kurram militia had one lieutenant colonel as commandant, two majors commanding the two wings, a major as second in command, two majors performing the duties of adjutant and quartermaster and one captain as education officer. Postings were frequent, the usual stay in Kurram Militia was one year for majority of officers, they were reverting back to army mostly due to promotion to the rank of field officer, on the other hand officers were inter posted between the Frontier Corps units which allowed them to have a better understanding of the frontier peculiarities, for instance Captain Iftikhar was posted from Zhob Militia and Captain Abdul Qadir was posted to Mahsud Battalion.

Diamond Jubilee Year

Kurmites as the Kurram Militia is known in Frontier Corps celebrated its Diamond Jubilee between 8th August-11th August 1968. It started with a ceremonial parade commanded by Major Agha Syed Jalal Shah Akbar, he was performing the duties of second in command, the parade itself comprised of four companies, Diamond Jubilee colour was presented by the chief guest IGFC Brigadier Mahboob Khan; it was received by Major Mir Nawaz the adjutant

of Kurram Militia. Inter wing sports competitions were also part of the Jubilee ceremony in which No.1 Wing won all events less the basketball which was won by the headquarters wing, Major Arbab Hamid Khan received the commissioner's cup from the IGFC. Various other sports events were also organised including tent pegging, shooting match among officers. The most colourful event was the tribal dances and also the fancy gymkhana . quite a number of old Kurmites officers and large number of retired junior commissioned officers were guest of the corps for three days. A durbar was also held presided by IGFC who paid glowing tributes to Kurram Militia. 'Large number of felicitations messages were received from the living British officers from UK on completion of 75 years of our existence'.¹⁵ Many junior commissioned officers including subedar Yaqub Ali Turi, Wazir Ali Turi, Muhammad Raza Turi, Ghulje Mangal and Sultan Khan Budda Khel were promoted in the same celebrations. Preparing for Diamond Jubilee is not an easy task especially at a far off place like Parachinar, special souvenirs were prepared and given to all guests, mess was renovated and additional accommodation was created , many guests were accommodated by the officers in their houses, fortunately weather remained calm during the ceremony.

Leave the most delicate and sensitive issue in the life of all uniform personal all over the world was quite liberal in Kurram Militia, apart from the regular type of leaves with which all military men are accustomed, the Kurram Militia had 'marriage leave' and 'post leave'. All local tribesmen were entitled one and half month leave whereas non local tribes were granted two months leave. Special pilgrimage leave was another leave unique to Kurram Militia only; it was granted to not more than twenty members every years to perform pilgrimage to Karbela and Mashad for a period of four months. Casual leave to Turis was of seven days where as Parachamkanis were entitled eleven days of leave and Barak Khattak and non local tribes were given twenty days of leave. Post leave was the privilege of post commander who could sent 10% of the strength on leave for six nights. All in all, only 120 men were required at any given week end at Parachinar; remainder were allowed to go on week end which started from Friday afternoon till Sunday noon. Marriage leave was of seven days for own marriage and nights in case of friend or relatives marriage, a man getting married had to give one month advance notice and normally not more than four men were given leave to attend a single marriage ceremony.

Discipline was strict and all punishments were dealt under the law¹⁶, all powers were vested in Commanadnt , who in turn may delegate his powers to wing commanders and adjutant. When delegated, these officers could imprison men upto 28 days, extra guards and piquets, fine upto one month pay; these were mostly for sepoys. An non commissioned officer was usually reprimanded, forfeiture of lance or acting rank alongwith forfeiture of specialists allowance. A wing second in command had the power to imprison men for maximum of fourteen days and fines not exceeding one month pay. There was one catch in it, any officer who had failed to pass the higher Pashtu examination was not delegated with any of these powers. All punishments had to be supported with a crime report. Prisoners were all well looked and well fed, they were given meat{1/4 pounds} once a week.

¹⁵ Frontier Corps Newsletter,1968.

¹⁶ NWFP Rules 1942, Section 18.

Telephone was a rare item then, instructions were ‘ may only be used for government business, conversation must be brief as possible and should be on urgent matters only’. Fakirs were not allowed in the vicinity of any post, guests of troops were allowed to stay in lines for maximum of three days, only three guests per company were allowed at any given time, children were not allowed to stay as guests. Messing of soldiers was on platoon basis and none was allowed to take his meal separately; however it has been a debatable issue for last so many decades because traditionally men tend to have ‘tarka ‘ at their own and further it has become a culture in all corps of FC to have ‘programme’ for the friends or qaum , coming or going to leave or even coming to headquarters from wings or posts and vice versa. Religion a delicate and sensitive issue was dealt in a military manner ‘ no extension or enlargement of mosque, praying site in or near the lines, posts and camp was allowed’. Kurram Militia today have the most modern , well decorated and fitted with latest amenities in mosque and imam bargah; even church is maintained by the militia for Christian followers. Aim was and still is to regulate the religious affairs in a sensible manner thus individuals are not allowed to take this affair into their own hands.

Indo-Pak War 1971

In the 1971 Indo-Pak War, one company of Kurram Militia consisting of 160 men, under command Captain Farhad, took part in East Pakistan. There, the troops were affiliated with 39 Baluch Regiment which was then commanded by Major Behari. Kurram Militia troops fought in Chittagong, Komila, Pabna and proved their worth. Four sepoy got shahadat in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh); rest were made prisoners of war along with rest of military formations and were repatriated under Simla Agreement.

Kurram Militia 1979-1989

Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 almost coincides with the second anglo Afghan War of 1878-79, again Kurram Valley was in forefront as it absorbed the largest number of Afghan Refugees among all the tribal agencies., it had 33 camps with 3,47,146 refugees living in it¹⁷; the total population of valley excluding the refugees was 2,88,835., thus by 1986 the Afghan refugees outnumbered the natives and this changed the demography of the valley with far reaching effects which are still reverberating. The refugees mainly belonged to Ghalji, Khugyani, Jaji, Chamkani, Muqbal, Zadran, Kharoti, Sabri, Safi, Tajik, Hazara, Mangal, Mahsud and Shinwari tribes. Camps were established at Matasangar, Ghuzghari, Basu, Ashgaro, Gerzindi, Maidni, Muzzafarkot, Old Bazgal, New Bazgal, Khardand, Shabak, Ahmadi Shama, Satin, Tindo, Durrani, Guwaki, Shashu, Arawali, Sraghurga, Bushara, Parachinar and Sadda.

Landiwan Operation 1981

¹⁷ Defence journal, volume XVIII, No,1,1983 *afghan refugees in Pakistan* , by brigadier [r] said azhar.

On 20 December 1981 Afghan refugees of Asgharo Camp picked up a clash with local Turis of Sohbat Khan village on cutting of trees. Turis shot one Afghan and wounded three. The Afghan refugees retaliated and with a strength of about 3000 men surrounded Sohbat Khan village. Firing started and resulted in more refugees death and 11 injured, Political authorities along with 2 companies of Kurram Militia commanded by Major Asad Parvez reached the spot, Major Asad, along with four soldiers sneaked from rear of the village and forced Turis of Sohbat Khan village to surrender. This way the problem of Afghan refugees and Turis was solved after further negotiations and deliberation by the political authorities.

Kurram Militia

Operational role of Kurram Militia was now aligned with the new realities with task to defend and take retaliatory action against Afghan Posts at Peiwar Kotal, Kharlachi and Lakak Tigga . Kurram militia which had remained a two wing corps since inception had the third wing added in November 1975, it was raised by having transfers from other corps' and through new recruitment. Afghan War now added more responsibilities and as such fourth wing was raised in January 1984 when No.38 wing from Shawal Rifles was transferred and fifth wing was added on 1st February 1988.¹⁸ Integral field battery was equipped with 25 pounder guns.

Afghan War was an exciting period, the agency was bustling with the refugees, army units also came in and the present army mess and barracks were constructed in 1979, anti aircraft regiments were also stationed in Kurram, notably at Arawali and at Roberts Garden which is few miles ahead of Parachinar. It altogether a different environments never felt before in the history of valley, all tribes became united, and there was no difference on sectarian grounds and neither any division on the lines of tribal or settled areas. Afghan aircraft were regularly violating the own airspace, mostly cutting the salient north of Parachinar. On 25th December 1986, two gunships of Afghan Air Force entered own area over Peiwar Kotal and while hovering they fired six to eight rockets on the town out of which one landed at the Kurram Militia Officers Mess and partially damaged one wall. Afghan and Russian resorted to dirty tactics in which mines were thrown in the shape of children toys on the main tracks and many children lost their lives and limbs due to these.

On **18th March 1986**, four , Afghan aircraft bombed and strafed Kurram Militia Post at Karshaya,, which was being commanded Naib subedar Shah Jehan Khattak, who valiantly opened his 14-5mm anti-aircraft gun on the intruders, resultantly he along with four other soldiers embraced shahadat and eight other were wounded. Government in recognition of their valiant stance awarded and decorated shaheeds, Naib subedar Shah Jehan with Sitara –i-Basalat and, lance Naik Naeem Turi, Lance Naik Raza Khan Afridi, lance Naik Abdul Hassan Yousafzai and sepoy Masan Jan Afridi with Tamgha Basalat. Kurram militia was authorised 32 officers, including four medical officers under the command of one lieutenant Colonel but only fourteen officers were present. Total strength was 3061 other ranks with Turi having the lion share of 827 men followed by Khattak with 442 men, Mangal with 222 men, Badda Khel and Orakzai had 166 men each, Bangash, Ranizai, Yousafzai, Mohmand, Bhittani and Afridi

¹⁸ Defence journal, Volume XVIII, No.3-4, 1992, Lieutenant Colonel Salam, commandant Kurram militia, *Kurram Militia*

all had 109 men where as Maqbal and Zadran had 56 men each and there were mixed men of around 55. The support company comprised of medical, electrical mechanical engineers, animal transport {28}, cooks{97}, missalchi, mess waiters and non-combatant enrolled {193}. In terms of ranks, there were five subedar majors, 51 naib subedar, 185 havildar, 327 naiks and 2106 lance naiks/sepoys.

Weapons were light, however eight 12.7mm guns, six 14.5mm guns single barrel and equal number of twin barrel guns were taken on loan from army to counter the Afghan aerial incursions. 75 mm recoilless rifle was an integral weapon , to bolster the anti-tank defence six 106mm RR were also taken on loan from army, other than this 40mm rocket launcher was the standard weapon against hard body vehicles. There were 144 light machine guns and 32 machine guns, First line ammunition of Rifle G-3 comprised of 403020 cartridges. There were certain defeciciencies as well most glaring were in terms of tents where instead of 48 screen latrines only 25 were held, and same holds true for 180 pounds tents where deficiency was in excess of 75 tents.

Training was never comprised irrespective of the deployment or the commitments, in 1986, 1879 ranks had range efficiency test{RET} and 1986 had the physical efficiency test{PET}. Same holds true for education, religious training, English, map reading and army education classes were held despite the deployment at the border and it goes to the credit of soldiers and their instructors that no less than 90 men passed map reading out of 101 who appeared, the duration of classes ranged from eight weeks for English to 12 weeks for religious training. These religious training classes were important as the troops were able to understand the fundamentals of religion and thus they were able to comprehend the sectarian difference in a much more open and relax manner, 96 men attended the classes in 1985 and 97 in 1986.

Operation Clean Up 1987

There had been peace in the Kurram Agency since the sectarian clashes of 1984 which had ended in a political agreement between both the sides with the help of Waziri elders and political authorities. But, with the passage of time, things started deteriorating. 1987 was a year of hectic activities which saw Kurram Militia fully involved in defusing the tension and maintaining law and order with the assistance of army. That year, the number of sabotage activities were very high. The public life and the administrative machinery was totally paralysed. It was an urgent requirement to take some positive steps to control the mischievous activities of the saboteurs. At that point of time it was felt that the military clean-up operation could be the only solution. Still, the political administration kept adopting persuasive methods on the one hand and taking action on individual basis against the known and suspected saboteurs on the other. This, fairly discouraged the free movement of such elements and prevented them to execute their plans and activities as well. In frustration, such elements, then decided to come out in open confrontation. Thus, the stage was set for the worst sectarian clash. Worst clashes occurred at village Bushara, Carbina, Mahura, Nasti Kot, Kunj Alizai and Ten' Mangal. In those worst sectarian clashes, Kurram Militia was not only assisted by Thall Scouts, Tochi Scouts and South Waziristan Scouts but in fact it was Thall Brigade which commanded

the Frontier Corps units and helped Kurram Militia to settle down the crisis. As a result of that crisis and later clean up operations, the display of arms/ammunition on roads was banned.

Centenary Year 1992

The centenary year of Kurram Militia and 49th Frontier Corps week were celebrated at Parachinar from 7th – 11th October 1992. President of Pakistan Ghulam Ishaq Khan was the chief guest, General Asif Nawaz Janjua, Chief of Army Staff, Gulistan Janjua Governor of NWFP and present IGFC along with all former and retired IGFCs also graced the occasion. Darbar was addressed by the president who later also distributed cash awards to widows of Kurram Militia. Ceremonial parade was held, later a lunch in the Kurram Mess was arranged for the guests and a musical evening at night created an ambience of good will and joy. An officer shooting match with Rifle G-3 was another interesting event.

KURRAM - 10th SEPTEMBER 1996

The killing of the Principal (Mr. Israr Hussain Bangash) of Government High School No 1 by some activists of ISO/Government College students triggered the crisis at 0930 hours on 10 September 1996.

Reportedly, on 7 September 1996 an anti Shia slogan was found written on the black board of 8th class. Since then i.e. 7 September, it had caused considerable tension between the two sects both in the school and nearby college. It is pertinent to know that both school and college had predominantly Shia (approx. 80%) students and teaching staff in each. The deceased principal, prior to his death had sincerely worked to diffuse the situation and provided required protection to all the Sunni students, though himself a shia. On his refusal to hand over the Sunni children to the armed activists, the Principal followed by two students (Sunnis) was shot/killed on the spot.

The incident of killing of Principal was reported to the Commandant Kurram Militia at about 1000 hours on 10 September 1996. He immediately rushed a contingent of available troops under a Captain to the School to control the situation. However, the moment this force reached the High School, intense firing had broken out from all direction of the city towards the School. In fact this was the flash point and thereafter, entire Parachinar City was engulfed in an unprecedented exchange of heavy weapons and small arms fire which continued for well over next 36 hours, resulting in serious loss of life and properties which were gutted due to blazing fires.

As the news added with rumours spread towards the rural areas, the entire Kurram Agency became a vast battle-field between the two warring sects thereby causing colossal loss

of life and damage to property. The IGFC (Major General Fazal Ghafoor) touring Mohmand and Bajaur Scouts received the information at 1330 hours at Momad Gat. Prior to that the DIGFC (Brigadier Zafar) had ordered mobilization of following FC troops to Parachinar:-

The entire Thall Scouts (with its Headquarters and three wings).

One Wing Mohmand Rifles (MR).

One wing Mahsud Scout (MS).

One wing Tochi Scouts (TS).

One wing Shawal Rifles (SR).

Armoured Car Squadron.

Two Medium Guns of Artillery.

Three Field Batteries of Artillery

The IGFC (Major General Fazal Ghafoor) alongwith the DIG (Brigadier Zafar) and Commissioner Kohat (Mr. Sharif Ahmad Khan) arrived at Parachinar at 1700 hours the same day. After assessment of the situation and with the arrival of troops, the following plan was formulated/executed to control the situation:-

Parachinar City was cordoned to seal it's entries and exits from all sides. The thwart rumours and prevent alarm, all telephones in the area were straight away disconnected on orders of IGFC. Control of city the entire Agency was divided into three sectors for better command, control and coordination with the Political Administration.

Parachinar City - Colonel Mushtaq Hussain Commandant Thall Scouts with three wings Thall Scouts to secure peace.

Upper Kurram - Colonel Syed Abid Shah Commandant Kurram Militia, with Kurram Militia less two wings, wing each of Mohmand Rifles and Mahsud Scouts and armoured car squadron to secure peace in the area.

Lower Kurram - Lieutenant Colonel Khurshid Alam with two wings ex Khurram Militia and wing each Tochi Scouts and Shawal Rifles to secure the area.

Conduct Of The City Operations

The city was divided into 4 sub sectors and accordingly 4 strong and balanced contingents (each under an officer) comprising APCs and troops were formed to conduct the operation. The Operation commenced at 0800 hours (11 September 96) and the situation was brought under control by 1300 hours. The operation was quite smooth except for the resistance at two points that is the Main Mosque (of Sunnis) and the Main Imambargah (of Shias). Every street of the town was secured from the fire of the militants. To ensure even handed treatment the Main Mosque was occupied-first and thereafter the Imambargah. Central figures in both

these places were detained/apprehended. Within city, all vantage points were occupied with own troops in order to fully control the built up area.

After controlling the city a strong contingent with APCs and Arty was dispatched towards Bushara, Mali Khel and Shakh villages. The former is inhabited by Sunnis while the latter belong to Shias. Under intense heavy and small arms fire, deployment of FC troops was effected between the warring sects and the security of these villages was ensured.

In order to secure peace in the far flung rural and border areas, strong contingents comprising a wing each mortars, RRs and 12 APCs/armoured Cars were sent in given directions on 12 September:-

Parachinar - Pekar - Teri Mangal

Parachinar- Sadda

Parachinar - Nasti Kot - Maqbal

Parachinar - Badama - Kirman

Parachinar - Zaran

Parachinar - Mali Killi - Bushara - Nasti Kot

These efforts were highly effective in controlling the situation. On 13 September 96 the IGFC personally chaired the joint Jirga of Turis and Maqbals in Maqbal area and the warring factions were forced to abandon their defences on hill tops. Concurrently, these positions were occupied by FC Troops. Similarly on 15 September 96, two strong columns each led by the IGFC and the DIG (Brigadier Zafar) from different directions coveredged at Kharlachi to take necessary steps against the reported interference by Taliban across the border. After conducting negotiations with Taliban Commanders and elders of Turi (Shia) tribe, the situation was brought under total control and troops were deployed in the vacated positions of both sides. The Frontier Region (FR) lashkar of Massuzai and other Para chankani tribes who were preparing to descend/assault on Parachinar were forced to return to their areas and the dominating heights/features astride approaches were blocked/occupied by own troops. With effect from 16 September 1996, the conditions had fast returned to normal, seriously wounded persons needing evacuation from Parachinar to Peshawar were transported under FC escort/protection. Displaced children and families in adverse possession were exchanged and shifted to safe destinations on their request. Their number had exceeded 2000 individuals. Curfew was relaxed on daily basis, Search and recovery operations for heavy weapons and their ammunition were undertaken these operations yielded astronomical results. Four lady Police Constables were also shifted from Kohat for searching females during the house searches.

Operation Almizan

Kurram Militia was the very first unit of Frontier Corps which took part in the Operation Almizan, one wing of Kurram Militia along with two platoons of two Baloch regiments initiated the operation on 11th December 2001, Kurram's surrounding area was cordoned and searched, primary aim was to sanitize the area, in the end ten miscreants were killed and 189 were arrested.

Kurram Valley itself remained safe from the inferno of foreigner miscreant and Kurram valley remained peaceful and life was normal, it all changed in February 2007 when sectarian riots erupted in the valley, a bomb was hurled at a Shia mosque in which over 43 people died and from then onwards the valley remained in the grip of unknown fear as warring factions with their ugly agenda spread a reign of terror, mostly on the basis of sectarian rift. Thal – Parachinar road remained closed for well over two years before it was opened and after heroic deeds of Kurram Militia in co-ordination with other units of frontier Corps and army, slowly and gradually brought back normalcy.

There are a total 30 passages between Pakistan and Afghanistan in the Agency and Kurram Militia with its five wings is responsible for manning the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border. The very first sign of unrest in agency started with this barbaric and coward act. In 2008, there was one rocket attack, and the very first menace of modern era, the improvised explosive device{IED}. In 2009, the intensity increased to eleven rocket attacks, four cases of IED and five instances of abduction.

Sectarian conflict in the valley dates back almost two centuries ago, however in 1901, Parachinar witnessed some of the worst in the history till then. In present time the conflict may be traced to the dispute erupting over the drinking and irrigation water distribution between the Mali Khel {Shia} and Boshera {Sunni} villages. Mali Khel tried to link the irrigation channel of Boshera towards their lands, in retaliation the Boshera fired upon the Mali Khel and at the end of 2006, 46 people had lost their lives for a petty issue; with Mali Khel suffering most. The core issue in valley is that normal irritants & issues which are so common in a tribal society always gets the colour of sectarianism instead of tribalism. In 2008, the issue was no more on water rather it was revenge, and it soon became so anarchic that it was difficult to pin point the blame on any one tribe, government property is always the first one to suffer and it did. Relief convoys bound for Parachinar were looted by the miscreants at Pir Qayyum in Sunni dominating areas along Thal –Parachinar road. 2009 was no different, a new issue erupted which is itself a hundred years old, Balaishkhel territory. It is a barren plateau on the northern edge of Sadda across the Kurmania river, the British had handed over the land papers to the tribe which belongs to Shia sect, it is contested by Sunni living in Sadda; it is almost identical to what Daur and Wazir have around Miranshah, but unfortunately here it is sectarian issue and at Miranshah it is dealt as tribal issue. In 2009 alone, 34 people lost their lives over this issue.¹⁹

In December 2009, the sectarian conflict had resulted in the closure of the main artery of the valley from Kohat onwards, miscreants were now settling down in the central Kurram after military operations in swat and other parts of the province. Central Kurram being adjacent to the Khyber and Orakzai was fast becoming the safe haven for these misguided elements of the

¹⁹ Official account of Kurram Militia, dated December 2009.

society. Sadda now became their hub with public hanging taking place, taxes being levied on the natives and reportedly the Taliban leadership was also concentrating in the area. The sectarian differences and resulting violence was fast leading to a civil war. The demographic layout of the valley is as such that Shias are predominant in upper Kurram with Sunnis having stronghold in lower Kurram with pockets of both sects isolated in both regions. It was in this background that military launched Operation Khawakh Ba De Sham, in two phases. In the first phase Khyber and Orakzai agencies were flushed from these rogue elements and in second phase which started on 22nd December 2009, Central Kurram was targeted and Kurram Militia joins the action in this phase. Two wings of Kurram Militia, a company of Thall Scouts, an frontier Force regiment, a squadron of tanks and a battery of medium regiment comprised of the task force.

15th November 2009

In the first phase opening of road was vital and that was possible only after evicting the Sadda town from miscreants. Lieutenant colonel Masood Ali Jaffery was commanding the No.2 Wing, it was his duty to do so and he did in an admirable manner. On 26th October 2009, he launched the operations and was able to bring peace in the city. On 15th November, the road Parachinar- Thall which was closed for last two years was planned to resume its normal life, thus a convoy, the very first convoy having over one hundred civilians mostly women, children and old men was schedule from Peshawar to Parachinar, it was a test of both the government and the miscreants, and morale of people and subsequent events in valley largely hinged around the successful arrival of this convoy at destination. Its success largely now depended on the Kurram militia or on No.2 Wing. Intelligence reports gathered by Lieutenant colonel Masood highlighted that forty miscreants are laying an ambush on the convoy at Shishu near Sadda as a sign of their dominance. Heavy exchange of fire took place but convoy remained scrathless and arrived at Parachinar much to the delight of dwellers.

Khawak Bade Sham²⁰

Sadda which remained a thorn in the peace of the valley was the next objective, and holding of two passes namely Badama and Tindo were vital to wretched it from the clutches of miscreants and to thwart any future attempt from them.

Dogar and bridge at Taodeobo as the final objective, the bridge provides access to neighbouring Khyber and Orakzai agencies, another important bridge was Tarali as own logistics for further development of operations were dependent upon its control. Taodeobo bridge is surrounded by four dominating features which are now name as Khalid, Tausif, Nazar and Ghaffar{ these were initially just grid references but now are named after brave men of Kurram Militia} two approaches lead to it, first approach Badama-Tarali-Taodebo, is well defined and navigation is accurate even in dark hours but it was believed to be more susceptible

²⁰ Pashtu words which means ‘ you will like me after this’ or ‘I will sort you out’.

to the ambush as the layout of ground is as such. Other approach namely Kirman-Makhizai-Said Karam-Kimal Bazar-Gondal finally terminates at Taodeobo, predominantly an infantry march as vehicular movement is almost non-existent, major advantage was that it bypass the miscreants and eventually cut them off from their rear; in the end a combination of both approaches was adopted with main force coming through the second approach.

On **12th December 2009**, soon after the midnight the operation started, main force comprising of infantry battalion²¹, wing Kurram Militia along with company Thall Scouts advanced on Badama- Dogar axis where as a company of infantry battalion²² along with company of Thall Scouts, their mission was to link up with the main force at Taodeobo Bridge.

At 0415 hours, main force was ambushed at Tarali. Major Nazar Abbas set an example for others, he was in the leading vehicle when the first burst hit his vehicle, in the semi darkness the firing and ambush can be nerve wrecking and any delay action on part of the ambushed force can have devastating results. Major Nazar Abbas sensing the and appreciating the situation, himself took position behind the machine gun mounted on the vehicle and returned the fire, he was in extreme danger as there is no protection in such position but for him his own safety was the last thing, mission was important. This acted as catalyst for the morale of the troops, Sepoy Said Zaman was another fearless soul who also rose beyond the call of duty, and he acted as runner with Major Nazar and passed the instruction to the forward and flanking scouts. Ambush had cut the force into two halves thus practically Major Nazar was at his own to hold the ground and let the rear force join him. Gunships soon appeared on horizon and it was Major Nazar who had to direct them on to the suspected bunkers and positions of miscreants for the reason that he was the man on ground; in the end objective was achieved. Subsequently both passes were cleared and taken under own protection.

Miscreants launched and carried on small hit and run tactics, attacking various posts with small arms and rocket fire, laying ambush and placing IEDs at various places. On the night of **16/17 January 2010**, Ghulo Ghundal post came under attack, initially fire was carried out by them from close vicinity which lasted for an hour followed by physical attack, which resulted in their getting away with few arms and ammunition despite stiff resistance. Tindo Post came under attack on 25th January but it was neutralised mostly due to the courageous action of Naib subedar Lal Hakim who himself received injuries in the action.

On 24/25th January , in a clearing operation led by the Commandant Colonel Tausif Akhtar, the Saeed 11 Post was established but commandant was hit with a bullet on his leg. The history will be incomplete without mentioning the extra ordinary display of courage, dedication, spirit de corps and loyalty of Havildar Noor Ali Shah Khataik; he is presently performing the duties of regimental Havildar of Kurram Militia. His citation reads

‘On the night of 24/25th January 2010, miscreants attacked Saeed Post No.1 with heavy automatic weapons and succeeded in capturing and over running the post, to launch a counter attack, this non-commissioned officer was tasked the mission, which he accomplished with his leadership and bravery, the miscreants who were ready to repulse any attack were forced to flee

²¹ 31 FF

²² 35 Punjab regiment.

due to sheer courage of this NCO, he was the first one to reach the post and hoist the Pakistan flag again. Next day a detachment of Kurram Militia was ambushed close to the post, this brave man immediately arrived at the scene and made a shield of himself to protect his commander, in the process he received two bullet wounds yet he remained on sight and evacuated his comrades safely'.²³

Noor Ali was performing the duty of quartermaster at the tactical headquarters of Kurram Militia at Sadda, on the night when the post was over run, he was volunteer to lead the attack, he was trained at Special Services Group {SSG} school at Cherat for counter insurgency. He reached at the post in the mid of night, covering a distance of over 12 Kilometres in three hours, he came under heavy fire from the top but still he persisted and led his platoon;

'To me nothing is more sacred than the motherland's sanctity, I vowed to myself either to die or to win back the post, when I hoisted the flag, I was crying with pride and joy. In the morning when, reinforcement arrived, I move back to Sadda, as I was entering the compound, I saw Kurram Militia vehicle going out, I inquired and came to know that my commandant's convoy has been ambushed thus I sat in the vehicle and rushed to the spot. When we reached near the site, I got down, the commandant was hit with bullet in his legs and was lying on ground, firing towards the incoming fire, I rushed, crawled, stalked but finally I reached near him. Commandant Tausif was a special commandant, to me and to all scouts, commandant is a very special person, like a father, like the head of the tribe and there was no second thought in me, moreover this is what I was trained at Cherat, thus I made a shield of myself for him and got two bullets in the end'.

Havildar Noor also narrated that initially the name of the operation was 'Operation Rose' which was after one of our soldier who was kidnapped by the miscreants but managed to escape, commandant while addressing the force before embarking on mission spelled out this; it was at Sadda when Commandant Colonel Tausif changed the nomenclature of this operation.

Havildar Khair Ali got injured due to rocket attack at Tarali, Havildar Fida Hussain was injured along with Naik Muhamad Ayaz, Naik Waris and Naik Imdad Hussain when part of the force was ambushed at Gondal {Sadda}, ambush was foiled. On the same day Naik Anwar Said, Naik Habib Ullah and Lance Naik Lihaz Gul received injuries when an IED blast took place near Tarali School.

Operation Koh-e- Safeed –July –October, 2011

After the successful conclusion of the Khawak Badesham the town of Sadda became secure so were Badama and Dogar but the miscreants who were evicted found sanctuary in the adjoining area, kidnapping and extortion was still going on although at a much reduced level, Manatu, Mandan and Chinarak now became their safe havens. Road Shashu-Gawaki-Manatu-Chinarak- Doaba and Road Thall-Parachinar were unsafe and created unrest in the agency. The

²³ Citation of Havildar Noor Ali Khattak, dated 14th June 2010.

cardinal line in the area still remains the sectarian violence which the miscreants were trying to fan. An operation in Orakzai was already undergoing thus it was decided to launch an operation in the agency to not only evict the remaining miscreants but also to synchronise it with the operations in adjoining agencies there by making the life of miscreants unbearable. These anti state elements were thinly holding the Zangal, Gawaki, Krumb and Utt positions where as Manatu, Mandan and Shamkhai was reportedly held in strength. Operation was a combined team, comprising of one company Kurram militia, its two 25 pounder guns and three medium guns; other elements of the force included light commando battalion {NLI}, Azad Kashmir Regiment, troops of tank and five guns of medium regiment.

In the first phase it was decided to secure the base from Shashu –Gawaki, it was assigned to Kurram militia who were to later act as the holding troops through which two infantry battalions will pass, No.5 Wing Kurram Militia successfully secured 18 kilometres axis without any major trouble. Later company size force of light commando was heli dropped at King Pin followed by advance of company strength troops of NLI and AK regiments, they advanced to Green ridge which is south west of Manatu and had a successful link with heli dropped company; subsequently both companies advanced and reached Manatu and Mandan. In the final phase, at first light Kurram Militia task force moved to Tindo where as NLI reached Ghulo Ghundai, Azad Kashmir move from Tarali for route protection and tanks move from Tindo. By 1830 hours Kurram Militia task force left for Gawaki followed by two guns of medium regiment an hour later. By the end of the day all objectives were achieved, Manatu, Mandan and Chinarak were freed from miscreants, Shash-mantu-mandan road was secured, resultantly trade activities started in Sadda.

Koh –e-Safeed II, November- October 2012

As part of Murree accord, the road was opened from Thall till Teri Mangal on 30th October 2011, and normalcy returned to the agency, however there were still few irritants and Thall Brigade decided to remove them also; especially to cut off the escape route of miscreants through Murghan Kandao. Almost same force as employed in the first part of the operation {Koh –e-Safeed}, only addition was the Special Operation Group {SOG}.

Operation started with Azad Kashmir Regiment²⁴ advancing from Manatu and captured Shamkhai Ridge which dominates Murghan Dara and built up areas of Shamkhai & Murghan. On 14th November 2011, SOG-IV was tasked to establish a blocking position at Murghan which they did despite stiff resistance and intensive fire from miscreants, a higher ground at north east of ridge was the main hurdle in the over all hold of the ridge by own forces and it was becoming critical with every passage of minute; it now threatened the security of SOG itself. Major Sikander the commander thus decided to form two assault groups, one under his command and other under Captain Fahad. Both groups now moved forward in order to encircle the holding miscreants, Major Sikander while leading the first group was hit in his right leg but this brave leader of men despite the injury kept on leading and troops followed him, as he

²⁴ 3 AK.

reached near the objective, a fatal bullet hit him in the forehead and he took his last breath then and there. Objective was achieved and blocking position was established.

December was hectic as miscreants tried hard to regain the lost areas but own troops foiled all their attempts by sacrificing their lives. Many IEDs were detected and rendered useless by own bomb disposal parties. One major attack was launched by them on 20th April 2012 at Green Ridge, it came in daylight hours but not only it was repulsed but miscreants lost seven souls also.

Dogs of War

Kurram Militia purchased two dogs, one German shepherd {Bruno} and other a Labrador {Nala} at a cost of almost half a million rupees in 2011, these dogs along with two more dogs, one pair is a sniffer and other a tracker are used to detect explosives and also to track the attackers. Daily they carry out bomb disposal duties around the mess, office area and suspected locations. In Muhararm they are utilised to sanitize the route of procession; they are also employed in checking of the vehicles entering Pakistan at the border. Havildar Rehman Ullah Khattak, Sepoy Mahmood Khattak, Sepoy Jan Wali Yousafzai and Sepoy Ghulab Din are their handlers. Their most notable achievement was the tracking of miscreants who were responsible for an IED blast near Sadda which had resulted in the death of seven people, another big catch was the culprits responsible for the blast in Parachinar in which an IED was placed near an electrical pole. In another incident, a bomb was placed near Azadi Post, the sentry on post saw the man placing the bomb but it were these dogs who later took the handlers and the party to the door of the culprit.

Biography of a Militia.

Subedar Asmat Khattak joined Kurram militia on 10th November 1993, Kurram Militia was being commanded by Colonel Rab Nawaz Khattak.

' Training was simple, we were sixty recruits, mainly comprising of slow and quick march, firing and running, government Transport service {GTS} was the main mode of conveyance, fare from Peshawar – Parachinar was rupees thirty eight only, now it is rupees six hundred. During our training the basketball tournament was also held at Parachinar which was won by my militia. On 7th December 1993, I had my first encounter with snowfall, I was fascinated as I had never seen the snowfall before. Our training JCO was Subedar Rasul Khan Orakzai and havildar major was Hassan Ghulam Bhattani other instructors included Sher Aslam Yousafzai, Said Alam Mahsud who is now the Corps Subedar Major, 31 Frontier Force was the army unit stationed at Parachinar { it is coincidence that many years later same regiment fought together with Kurram Militia in war against the miscreants}, they borrowed our parade ground for their flag ceremony, I passed out on 17th May 1994, at that time my pay

was Rupees 925/-. After passing out, I was posted to No.2 wing at Sadda. My operational mission was in Swat where our wing proceeded to take part in the operation against the insurgents led by Sufi Muhammad. We stayed at Malakand for 27 days, a beautiful place, our accommodation was arranged in a sub jail. From Malakand we proceeded to Wadi gram, Saidu Shariff, Mingora, Bilogram and Chakdarra and later reached at Swat airport, we had civil transport with us mainly comprising of trucks. On our return, we were given a grand dinner by the Mohmand rifles, and at night we travelled back via Salarzai to reach Nawagai in Bajaur agency; Salarzai is a famous place where the graves of Sher Alam and Maimona still exist and many people come to pay their tributes to them.

Nawagai was a deserted place then, many people had died in the recent conflict, our soldier Lance Naik Zarma than Bhittani embraced shahadat there, from there we proceeded to Inayat Qilla and then to Kit Kot Qilla; it was a tough period as we neither had any bedding nor any warm clothing with us. In January 1995 we returned back to Parachinar, short period of rest before I was ordered to proceed to Fort Millward where our field battery was deployed, it was part of Independent Heavy Weapon Wing{IHW}, it had 3.7 inch guns, 12.7mm gun, mortar, MBRL, 25 Pounder gun, 30mm Shilka gun, RPG-7 Rocket launchers, cadres for these weapons were being run which I also attended. Our commander was Lieutenant Colonel Hassan Akbar Orakzai and 2IC was Captain Asad Jan. We later carried out operations in the Khyber agency during which we destroyed many factories of narcotics, in August 1996, violence again erupted in the Khyber agency in which six of our men embraced shahadat in Khajauri area and other four were injured. We were deployed in Shakas Fort along with Shawal Rifles, Mohmand Rifles and Chitral Scouts troops all under command Colonel Tariq Khan Mohmand Rifles'.

Subedar Asmat further narrates ' In February 2011 I was manning the Manojabba Post at Teri Mangal, when I was ordered to proceed to Frontier Corps Training Centre{FCTC} at Warsak to undergo Advance Combat Course{ACC}, I reported on 20th February, and course started on 24th February and terminated on 17th May 2011, our instructors were foreigners, we were 29 JCOs and 250 other ranks, after termination of course I was posted to SOG-III and ordered to carry on operation in Mohmand Agency, I was part of the group which carried out successful operations in Ghulono Baba, wali dad Top, Mamud Ghat, Sowaran, Shounkray, Ghula Para, we had seven casualties, nothing fatal, all due to one single IED. We then move to Khonzai, Baizai, Baidak towards Korsal, Ziaart and in Tora Bora areas, I was also part of the group when operation in Shundra, Anargai and Kandao was conducted. In Shundra the house of local miscreant commander Muhammad Shah was searched and in Anargai our target was the house of Maulana Nazir Mohmand, our commander was Captain Qadir of Air defence who later embraced shahadat; we all returned to Shakas Fort. It was here that one night we received orders to immediately carry out an operation in Nala {Bara, Khyber agency} as some suspected Taliban were reportedly were hiding, we four JCOs, 70 other ranks led by Captain Abdul Qadir and Captain Zohaib moved towards the target area, as we arrived near Nala, and started searching the place, we had completed 60% of the task, in the end we crossed a seasonal nullah, Captain Qadir had entered a house to carry out the search when fire started coming, I heard the information on wireless set that he has embraced shahadat'.

Sepoy Gul Nabi Turi was enrolled in March 2008, he after his training joined the Dogar Operation which started on 24th December 2009 ‘ *We left the Parachinar on same day, after few days of training at Sadda, we were ordered to move, the complete convoy including tank, APC, loaders were part of it, I was in the leading packet of the convoy when all of a sudden the fire came near Nari area.....five soldiers were killed and equal number were injured, I miraculously survived and was the only survivor, I carried all the dead to the vehicle and also the injured, my whole uniform was drench with blood. In another incident, we in Narri area, entered a school to carry out search operation, all rooms were checked less one which was locked, the local people told us that there is something in the room, as the lead party forced its entry, the room blew up, majority of injured and shaheeds were from Thall Scouts* ’

Sepoy Gul further narrates ‘ *On 7-8th June 2013, we carried out operation in Paroo area, it was believed to be a Taliban stronghold, the weather was such that even in this month it was cold in the morning with occasional patches of snow. I was a runner with Major Farhad, it was very cold, all night my duty was to scan the area with the help of Night Vision Devices, which was very effective, carry out patrolling, one night one of the army soldier fell down and a two inch deep wound occurred in which two fingers can go, I carried him down to the safety* ’.

Lance Naik Zarawar Jan Jaji joined Kurram Militia in August 1999, he received his training at Parachinar and in 2000 went to Tor Ghundai initially and later served at Peshawar also, in 2001 he was transferred to No.4 Wing from No.3 Wing and served at Kharlachi for three years, in 2003 he underwent Pioneer Training and moved to Ali Mangola, in 2005 he was promoted to Lance Naik and then for next eight months he remained at Mir Ali {North Waziristan}. In 2006, he was part of the force which had a skirmish with Afghan forces at Gawai Border. His home and all assets were burnt in 2007 sectarian riots and he moved his family to Shalozan area, unfortunately in September 2010, his home at Shalozan also was burnt and as such he had to take his family to Peshawar where he bought a small piece of land. It goes to the credit of his character, his training standards that despite all these personal tragedies he has been performing his duties with utmost dedication. Jaji are not inducted as a separate qaum or rather they are part of mixed platoon.

Profile of a sportsman, **Naib Subedar Ashiq Hussain Khattak** joined Kurram Militia in November 1991, he was promoted to the present rank in 2007, initial twelve years of his service he spent in sports, for three years he was a marathon runner, for five years he was part of Kurram Militia cross country team and was a winner in 5000 meters race also. In 2006 he spent a year in North Waziristan and later served in Kalaya operation in Orakzai Agency.

Lance Naik Rahim Jan Zadran, joined Kurram Militia in January 2001 and after training at Parachinar was posted to No.2 Wing at Kharlachi and after three years moved with wing to Sadda, ‘*initially the atmosphere was very good but later sectarian riots started erupting, in 2009 I was posted to No.5 Wing, during this period I took part in operations against Taliban in Dogar, AaloGhundai, Dappa. I once came under attack, I was at Ghaffar Post when the Taliban attacked the post, initially there is a shock but the composure of post commander gave us strength and we defended the post and forced the miscreants to flee*’. Rahim and many others like him who belongs to the Kurram Valley had to fight on many fronts, the sectarian riots affected his home, the agricultural land is almost non existant in mountain araes , there fore these brave soldiers of Kurram Militia are a symbol of what all is required from a militia man. Unlike the army soldiers who are from settled araes and as such are not affected with the

kind of sectarian riots and its fall out, the men of Kurram Militia have to bear the stress on both fronts.

Sepoy Rizwan Ullah Afridi of No.1 Wing joined Kurram militia in 2008 and after seven months of training, he spent next three months in Dogar Opeartion, then he became part of Chiga Party, he lost his home and all belongings when operation against Mangal Bagh took place in Khyber agency, now his family is living in a rented house and certainly the bills {water, electricity} are being paid by him which is a strain on his pay. This is how the overall life of an ordinary soldier has been affected, Sepoy Yarkhel Afridi is a young soldier, he joined Kurram Militia in 2010 and in a short span has seen active service, he also lost his home when Bara Operation was undertaken and now his family has also migrated to the Peshawar.

Nursing Naik Farman Ullah Marwat, is a graduate and joined Kurram Militia in 2004 *‘ I saw the advertisement in newspaper and applied for the post and later joined South Waziristan Scouts as Nursing Recruit, training lasted for another three months at Mir Ali, while I was at Mir Ali an operation took place at South Waziristan in which sixteen men of my unit lost lives; as a result of this operation almost one wing from each corps of Frontier Corps was ordered to reach South Waziristan . One day I was on duty at SWS hospital when a missile hit the hospital. I spent ten years of my service in SWS and in February 2014 I have been posted to Kurram Militia, I am now a nursing naik in chigha party’.*

Kurram Militia recruits the young men, train them and then inducts them as general duty soldiers, policy is given by the Headquarters frontier Corps and strength varies, at times trained soldiers from other scout corps are also transferred to Kurram militia. Training spans over twenty six weeks and similar time is spent in initial consolidation before they are given operational role, but it varies. Passing out parade is the main event in the social calendar of the Kurram Militia, chief guest is either the political agent or the IGFC. Recruits during training are housed in separate barracks and a dedicated staff is set aside for their training. There are certain classes which are not inducted as soldiers namely the sayyids due to the religious affiliation and affection which are given to them, also the mirasis and lower castes are not recruited as general soldiers but they can be enrolled in their special class, also the non-Muslims are not enrolled as soldiers in Kurram Militia. A typical recruit is a boy of under 22 years of age and mostly all of them have been doing some kind of job before getting their chance of being inducted in Kurram Militia; competition is stiff and preference is given to the next of kin of Shaheed and to the wards of serving or retired personals of Kurram Militia.

Asif Iqbal is a recruit with a college certificate, his father was also serving in army and retired in 2007, Asif himself was born in 1989, the only son of the family, studied in private schools and later in Federal government schools at Bahawalpur and Karachi where his father was posted, he was giving coaching to junior classes while still in class eight for the reason that, he wanted to be an independent, he was engaged and then married before he was twenty or before he had a job. He worked in Oil & Gas Development sector, tried to get the commission in army but failed mainly due to lack of requisite education standards, which he blames on lack of professors in the college at Lachi at Kohat. In 2013, he joined Kurram Militia and is a brilliant recruit with all the potential to rise high. *‘ I know this culture well before because of my father job, only difference is that before joining militia, I used to call all as uncle, now I am addressed as uncle, because anyone who is wearing uniform is called uncle by children. First month was spent in working and fatigue along with training which was drill, the day I*

wore uniform for the first time, I offered prayers of gratitude. Training is tough but very useful, I won prize in firing on 22nd December 2013, I also won prize in declamation contest in connection with birthday of Father of Nation, he was declared best in education too. On lighter side he narrates that the Supply Day is the worst day during training because we have to carry ration to the stores, majority of recruits have a weight category of 55-65 kilogram and sack of flour weighs around 80 Kilogram’.

Field Battery Kurram Militia

In 1982 the Field Battery was raised having 3.7 inch Howitzers and for next seventeen years these guns supported the Kurram Militia before being replaced with 25 Pounder Guns which were also inducted in 1989.

In early days, it was known as Gun Platoon, having four guns, two 3.7 inch Howitzers and two 75 mm Guns, they all were on loan and such there was no sanctioned strength, the crew was taken from the wings. The Gun platoon was organised into two sections of two guns each with a platoon headquarters; both sections had nineteen soldiers each. Headquarters Wing was responsible for the training with regular cadres and also to maintain 100% reserves for both types of guns. Packing and loading of guns on mules was an integral part of training. All soldiers were eligible to join the Gun Platoon with one limitation, the service should not be more than five years and he must agree to serve for three years in Gun platoon. Annual classification fire was held regularly and all gunners were supposed to fire the guns at least once a year according to availability of ammunition.

In 1992-93, the battery remained deployed at Kashmir. In 1994, Sepoy Syed Qanoon Afridi {Jowaki} joined the battery and now let's have the history of battery through his eyes.

‘I joined the battery in 1994 after completion of my basic training, in same year we move to Fort Shakas as part of IIHW and we took part in many operations in the area. In 1996, the sectarian riots in the Kurram valley resulted in our being called back to the valley, these guns were employed in restoring peace and order in the valley, especially in Alizai, Teri Mangal, Sadda, Balishkhel, Peiwar areas. In 1999 the field battery was move to North Waziristan Agency where the tribal dispute between the Wazir and Daur Tribes necessitated the employment of battery, it was being commanded by captain Sajjad, we fired approximately 200 rounds. We were placed at Durdani Camp, from where we were ordered to move to Orakzai Agency where also the sectarian riots were taking ugly shape, we move to Kalaya area in that agency and stayed for six months.

After 9/11, we move to Alwara Mandi in North Waziristan agency and later to Saidgi in the same agency, Major Asim was our commander. In 2005, we move to south Waziristan agency and were deployed at Ladda and Tiarza, where we remained deployed for a year and in September 2006 moved to Mohmand Agency, where our location was at Mamud Ghat and Khunazai and again we remained deployed for a year. In 2007 another battery was raised as part of Kurram Militia comprising of 130mm guns, Major Liaqat was our first commander,

our training was conducted at Nowshehra ranges. In 2008, the medium battery was sent to South Waziristan to take part in Operation Rah e Nazaat , it was deployed at Razmak, it remained deployed there for over two years firing over 3000 rounds in the process, during our stay at Razmak , the battery positions was almost receiving daily rocket attacks from miscreants which slowly and gradually terminated, Sepoy Hukmran was seriously wounded in one such rocket attack. During the operation the battery position itself acme under attack which was repulsed by us, we were later given the honour of Jangju Battery by the general officer commanding 9 Division. In 2010, we came to our home base at Kurram. During Operation Koh –e-Safeed we fire over 5000 rounds on suspected miscreants locations, in 2012, we inducted 155mm Howitzers, presently we have four 155mm guns, six 130mm guns and six 25 pounder guns apart from six 3.7inch Howitzers, all are deployed at various gun positions ranging from Manato, Lora Mela, Shashu, Parachinar, they keep on moving as the situation occurs. In 2013 we took part in the operation where jointly medium and field both took part’ .

Presently the battery or rather batteries are being commanded by Major Farhad, Subedar Qanoon is the senior JCO and Jan Muhammad is the battery havildar major.

Kurram Militia Officers Mess

Kurram Militia’s mess is historical in many perspective, Father of Nation, Quaid Azam has stayed and played billiard in this mess, Governor General Sikander Mirza, Field Marshall Ayub Khan, Prime Minister Zulfikar Bhutto, President Zia Ul Haq, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, President Farooq Khan Legahri, chief of army staff General Ishfaq Pervaiz Kayani have all graced this mess after the independence of Pakistan. In the British era Lord Minto Viceroy of India had stayed and dined in the Kurram Militia Officers Mess.

Originally the mess was established inside the old fort at Parachinar and in 1943 , it was shifted to the present location which since then has undergone many renovations but the spirit has been kept intact in all these years. The original mess inside the old fort {present day office area} was the place where silver jubilee was celebrated in 1917. The abinitio layout of Kurram militia was no different from other Frontier Corps Militia’s; it was almost suicidal to live outside the perimeter, North & South Waziristan Militias had the mess inside the forts and same holds true for Khyber Rifles, Zhob Militia and also for Chitral Scouts while they were stationed at Drosh.

The present location was initially Bungalow No.5 and Bungalow No.7 was located near the swimming pool, there were no guest rooms till 1957 rather a Dak bungalow was utilised for the purpose. Mess guard comprised of two non-commissioned officers and thirty one other ranks was deployed at night only for the complete complex²⁵. Famous painting of Kurram valley by Major Barret also bears the testimony to the fact, it was painted and presented in 1933 and there is no indication of mess rather only the fort is there and a garden with Union Jack flying at present site of mess, the old trees of the mess are however indicated in the painting. Old record at the political agent’s office have the water agreement and also timings for the

²⁵ Appendix to Corps Standing Orders, Volume III, 1958, p-82.

residences of the agency which included the agency surgeon, political agent and the commandant apart from soldiers' lines.

In 1923, captain E.P.Watts and his wife were murdered in their bungalow on 8th November, consequently temporary camps were established at Karman and Zeran, a 300 strong camp was also established at Sadda involving much additional piqueting and patrolling.

Mess after independence had its own rules, regulations and customs, it was managed by a mess committee 'they are not exhaustive and do not cover any contingency that may arise'²⁶. Mess committee comprised of a president, a secretary and third member who was supposed to be a volunteer; second in command was the president of this committee with commandant having veto power in all affairs.

Mess life and its running involves supervision of mess fund, contributions, subscriptions, presentations, employment and dismissal of staff, correspondence, hygiene & sanitation and above all the catering and preparation of menu; which in any case is not an easy task especially at palces like paarchinar. A mess meeting was usually held every quarter whose date was intimated almost a week in advance to all members , so they can forward their points. All officers on the strength of the Kurram militia were the members, honorary members were also allowed provided they are of equal social status. Between 1951-1960, the mess haviladar was allowed only to have rupees 50 as the petty cash and neither the committee was authorised to spend more than this amount per month for mess maintenance. As a rule, the accounts were adily palced in the ante room for officers to see the catering and expenditures but members were not allowed to make any alterations at their own. Mess did and still receives allowances from the headquarters Frontier Corps . Before the advent of automatic teller machine {ATM} the officers were allowed to borrow the mony from the Mess haviladr but this amount generally remained between rupees 50 – 100 from 1954 -1975. Mess bill's payment in army is a serious affair and it has to be paid before a laid down date which in case of Kurram militia was 15th of every month; bills were submitted to officers not later than 7th of every month; usually it was paid through cross cheques. Mess till 1977 had an active bar, 'wines, mineral and mess stores will be checked at the end of every month, each item will be initialled by a member of the mess committee'.

Dinner, Supper & Guest Nights

Dinner night is a standard night in which dinner is consumed in the mess at specific time in a specific dress, it is a parade and none can be absent without permission or without sufficient cause, a bugle used to blow half an hour before on all dinner nights. Supper Night on the other hand is the night when members can come to the mess at their convenience and can have the dinner in a dress of their liking, Guest Night on the other hand is the one in which all formalities like dinner nights are observed but guests are also invited. In Kurram Militia Mess at Parachinar, there were two dinner nights every week {Monday & Thursday} , dress was uniform. All other days of the week, there were supper nights, timings for all were notified by the mess secretary on the mess notice board. Officers were allowed to dine out on supper nights

²⁶ Kurram Militia Officers Mess rules, 1954.

provided they inform the mess 12 hours in advance, failure to do so was fined with rupees one. Sherwani, lounge suit and black shoes were the acceptable attire on supper nights {no brown shoes}. Guest nights were held once a month, guest book was circulated to all officers to write the name of the guests they intend inviting, married officers were also invited on this night, it was compulsory for married officers to have a dinner at least once a month in the mess. The standard procedure was that mess Havildar on all nights less supper nights used to announce 'dinner ready' to the senior dinning member, dressed in uniform. Drinking of toasts, till 1956 when Pakistan became a republic the toasts in the mess were for Queen & Pakistan. On guest and dinner nights, two officers were detailed as the president and vice president, it was the duty of the president to tap the table or ring the bell placed on the table and toast Queen & Pakistan one after the other, vice president in turn call on the officers, who will stand after the vice president has announced the toast. It was the delicate duty of the president to ensure that wine and minerals were passed and glasses are filled before he announces the toasts. It was commandant's discretion to have any other toasts after these two; coffee and cigarettes were not passed around before the toasts.

Messing in fifties was rupees 3/8/., separate meals included Chhota Hazri { bed tea}, breakfast, lunch, dinner and afternoon tea. Mess subscription in 1959 were varying depending upon the rank, commandant was paying rupees seven as entertainment fund where as a subaltern was being charged with half of this amount, same variation holds true for the library fund; otherwise the rates were uniform for mess maintenance {rupees eight} games fund {rupees six} and garden fund which was rupees two for all members. Mess library had daily newspaper which in case of Parachinar was at times weekly , at the minimum it was a day old. After mess members have read it was passed on among the married officers.

Mess Staff comprised of one mess Havildar, one lance naik, three cooks, one misalchi, one abdar{till 1977}, one khidmatgar, one dairy man, two malis, one dhobi, one sweeper and one marker.

The present day swimming pool was constructed in 1968, the Chinar guest rooms were made functional in 1967-1968.

Presently, mess is a treat to dine , live and stay. Before the present unrest there was a regular flow of visitors with families but now hardly any one dares to travel on the road from Kohat –Parachinar; the road itself was practically closed for almost five years due to military action in the area. Parachinar was a standard stop over for all the participants of National Defence College and as such a glance at visitor book of seventies and eighties highlight almost all two and three stars generals who visited the mess while being a field officer, General Shamim Alam Khan had been here as a student of the Defence College and later while in command of his armour regiment. Pakistan Air Force pilots were another regular visitors and visitor book have some sad and tragic stories written in its pages, as few pilots lost their lives shortly after writing their names in the book{ nothing superstitious}. Diamond and centenary celebrations are the high mark in the history of this mess, especially the 1992 celebration which apart from a galaxy of serving and retired officers had the president, governor and chief of army staff on the same day for lunch; hats off to the mess staff for managing the affair without any Murphy Law.

Oldest member of the mess staff is the marker, he is here for tennis and squash; he was enrolled in 1985 and before him his father held the position for 52 long years, he died in 1996. The cook in the mess also have a service of over thirty years and another cook served the mess for fifty long years. Imtiaz is another waiter who is in the mess for last eighteen years. In last fourteen years there has been no guest or dinner night rather the tendency is to take the food in room at least in winter when weather is too cold. Mess have its own generator, which runs from 1800-2300 hours in winter and from 1900-2300 hours in summer. For heating the wood is still used which the officers gets on payment, currently it is being sold at rupees 16 per kilogram. Dairy items are being purchased from own dairy farm, the corps bakery is one of the best rather the best in the valley, it is famous for introducing cakes in the city. A cable network also operates in the mess which is the source of entertainment. Mess have different life pattern in winter and summer which are in dire contrast to each other, there is heavy snow afll in winter along with strong chilly breeze which makes sitting in open almost unbearable however sunny days are a welcome sight. In summer, the mess gardens are green and present a beautiful sight, flower beds , birds flying around and long session sin the lawn, on full moon nights it is beyond words to express the feelings; they can only be absorbed.

Turi

Turi a Turk origin tribe, many Turis consider themselves of Persian origin for the reason that they adhere to Shia sect which is based in Persia, it can be true also but the fact remains that they do not speak Persian, in Chitral the Madaglasht are also Persian origin and despite passage of centuries they still adhere to Farsi which is absent among Turis. It is also very much possible that they were the original inhabitants of the valley, at least in upper Kurram and adopted the faith in middle centuries probably with the coming of emperor Humayun after his sojourn in Persia. They also have a code of life which is mainly unwritten and known as Turizana{Turi way of life}, it is not much different from the code of conduct of other tribes, like Mahsud²⁷, Turi also believe in death as punishment for adultery. Within the code which mainly focus on the punishments, there is ample room for everyone to prove his innocence if accused of heinous crimes like killing and adultery. Turi have five main clans , all settled in Kurram Valley and all adhering to single faith. The clans are Hamza Khel, Mastu Khel, Duperzai, Alizai and Ghundi Khel, collectively they are also known as five pillars or brothers. Turis can also be classified in two main categories namely Drewandis and Mian Murid. Turi is a strong believer in respecting anyone who claims to have an iota of holiness in him and as such they hold Sayyids in high esteem and more than often they have been taken for a ride by others, making good of simple nature Turi. In the early part of the nineteenth century, Kurram valley had three main religious families conforming to the three prominent segments of the valley formed by the rivers bisecting it, starting from North , Kirman River makes the first cut followed by Khurmania further down, both these rivers join Kurram on the left bank while no major river joins Kurram from right bank. Three distinct families of Sayed were settled in the valley namely Ahmadzai, Karman and Mahura. In 1820, Muhammad Noor Khan Turi after having a quarrel with his spiritual Pir²⁸ decided to import one Sayed exclusively for himself

²⁷ See *Mahsud Monograph* by Omar Afridi a political agent in South Waziristan. 1980, p-

²⁸ *Kurram Gazetteer*, 1944, unpublished copy. Kurram Militia archives.

and invited Sayed of Tirah, this family of Tirah is known as Mian Murids and soon had a niche for themselves, thus Turis are now divided into two main factions as far as the following of religious leaders is concerned, Drewandi {old one} they adhere to the three old houses of holy smen which have been mentioned earlier and Mian Murid {new one} or having more close link with Afridi. This incursion of Tirah holiness have caused many bloody fights among the Turis, but the positive aspect is that it has brought the Turi and Afridi much closer than they were in past. An average Turi have relatively dark skin, average height and soft nature, they neither have blue eyes nor hawkish nose²⁹.

Turi have a unique way of saluting, he points his finger to his forehead and expects a reply in same manner, a crouched finger generally means that Turi have included the other in his hit list. He carries sword all the time which again is of extraordinary length and is curved; more or less like a Kukri of Gurkhas but almost double in size, his traditional dress is of black colour and he is fond of good attire. Food is simple like other Pathan tribes, abundance of game bird and fish in the valley has made availability of meat a common and regular dish. Turi is more liberal as far as womenfolk is concerned, at least when compare to a Wazir.

Mangals. The Mangals live in the upper and southern portions of the Kurram Valley, and in Paktia province of Afghanistan. The tribe is divided into five clans, Miral Khel, Khanjuri, Zab, Marghai, and Kamal Khels. The major portion of these clans live in the Paktia province of Afghanistan.

Zadgran

Zadgran is a Karlani Pathan tribe, which inhabits the extreme north and North Western hills of Kurram Valley, i.e, Safeed Koh and area around the Parachinar, it is a cross frontier tribe which have its roots in Paktia, Paktika and Khost area in present day Afghanistan. They migrated to present location in 1800. This concept of migration needs elaboration. Two hundred years ago the population was less, and this tribe did not had more than thousand people migrating to Kurram valley which was under the Turi control, now a tribe does not allow other tribe to settle in their territory, there are only two ways, either you forcibly conquer the area or have a diplomatic settlement with the owners in which you agree to abide by the customs of the area, do work and pay some of it to the already occupants. Zadgran was a nomadic tribe as almost all Afghan tribes are mainly due to the harsh weather which forces them to migrate down to plains in winter along with their herd. They have nothing special in terms of customs or traditions, they follow the same as other Pathan tribes where punishments and distribution of wealth is concerned. Death is the yardstick for adultery with variations in terms of whether woman was married or single. On death the whole tribe arranges food for the bereaved family and on marriage the bridegroom has to pay the amount for the bride family festivities and is generally done in a solemn manner but still the only occasion when the drums are beaten.

Teri which is 21 Kilometres North West of Parachinar is the heartland of this tribe, Peiwar Tangi, Kherawa, Chirangoo, Shalozan Tangi, Sheikhabad, Kabuli Village and few houses at Malana which is six Kilometres away north of Parachinar are their main habitats. In fact the water to Parachinar Cantonment comes through their area and very first agreement was made with them for purchase of water in 1894. The population of the tribe is approximately around 1000 families. The first platoon

²⁹ Based upon observation of 250 Turi soldiers of Kurram Militia in February 2014.

comprising of Zadgran tribe was sanctioned in Kurram Militia in 1918 on the eve of Third Afghan War, till 1948 there were only 48 men from this tribe who had or were serving in the Militia. In 1979 another platoon was sanctioned in Kurram Militia, later this platoon was transferred to Bajaur Scouts where after the termination of the services the platoon itself was disbanded. Presently only two platoons of this tribe are serving in Kurram Militia having a strength of 90 men, the tribe follows Sunni sect. Naik Laiq Khan Zadgran is serving in Kurram Militia, he has done masters in political science and has been serving in Afghanistan as an interpreter with NATO forces.

BIODATA OF SHUHADA (OAM)

Ser	Rank	Name	Unit	Date of Shahadat	Place of Shahadat	NOK	
						Relation	No of Dependants
1.	Lnk	Syed Ibrar Hussain	Kurram Militia	21-6-06	NWA	Bibi Fatima (Wife)	07
2.	Sep	Shah Alam	"	21-6-06	NWA	Nek Karim (Father)	03
3.	Sep	Zakir Hussain	"	21-6-06	Kurram Agency	Zamina (Wife)	09
4.	Sub	Raz Gul	"	06-11-06	Road Accident	Barjamala (Wife)	11
5.	Sep	Gul Akhtar	"	30-3-07	NWA	Zamina (Wife)	09
6.	Sep	Fazal Rabbi	"	06-4-07	Parachinar Kurram Agency	Zarka (Wife)	06
7.	Sep	Zia ud Din	"	17-11-07	Parachinar Kurram Agency	Ajmeena Bibi (Mather)	07
8.	Lnk	Juma Khan	"	30-3-07	NWA	Namm Bibi (Wife)	07

Ser	Rank	Name	Unit	Date of Shahadat	Place of Shahadat	NOK	
						Relation	No of Dependants
9.	Lnk	Khaista Rehman	“	17-11-07	Parachinar Kurram Agency	Gul Net Begum (Mother)	03
10.	Sep	Niaz Ali	“	25-12-07	Parachinar Kurram Agency	Nadia Bib (Wife)	06
11.	Nk	Taza Gul	“	25-12-07	Parachinar Kurram Agency	Juma Gul (Wife)	09
12.	Sep	Mumtaz Ali	“	12-2-08	Sadda Kurram Agency	Bibi Sakina (wife)	08
13.	Sep	Amjad Hussain	“	16-2-08	Parachinar Kurram Agency	Sakina Bibi (Wife)	04
14.	Sep	Muhammad Naeem	“	29-10-08	Lower Kurram Agency	Minhaz Begum (Wife)	09
15.	Sep	Khair Muhammad	“	06-01-09	SWA	Amna Bibi (Wife)	03
16.	Sep	Muhammad Ayaz	“	06-05-09	HQKM Pcarachinar	Farhad Bibi (Wife)	03
17.	Lnk	Anwar Khan	“	20-11-08	Gala C/P KA	Samina Bibi (Wife)	05
18.	Sep	Said Rafiq	“	28-4-2010	Sadda Kurram Agency	Nazida (Wife)	03

Ser	Rank	Name	Unit	Date of Shahadat	Place of Shahadat	NOK	
						Relation	No of Dependants
19.	Sep	Rizwan Ullah	"	09-6-2008	Malakand Agency	Badama Bibi (Mother)	02
20.	Sep	Yaqub Ali	"	21-3-08	Mali Khel Kurram Agency	Naseema Bibi (Wife)	08
21.	"	Haider Zaman	"	28-12-05	Kajuri NWA	Zakia Bibi (Wife)	03
22.	Hav	Farid Rubban	"	03-7-09	Orakzai Agency	Riaz Begum (Wife)	06
23.	Lnk	Najaf Ali	Kurram Militia	03-7-09	Orakzai Agency	Sabira Bibi (Wife)	04
24.	Lnk	Muhammad Idrees	"	03-7-09	Orakzai Agency	Ajmina (Wife)	03
25.	Lnk	Nasrullah	"	03-7-09	Orakzai Agency	Asia (Wife)	06
26.	N/Sub	Muhammad Javed	"	03-7-09	Orakzai Agency	Mst Tasleem Bibi (Wife)	01
27.	Lnk	Azizur Rehman	"	03-7-09	Orakzai Agency	Jahena Bibi (Wife)	04
28.	Sub	Sher Zaman	"	03-7-09	Orakzai Agency	Bastaja (Wife)	06
29.	Nk	Shahid Rehman	"	03-7-09	Orakzai Agency	Kalsoom Bibi (Wife)	11

Ser	Rank	Name	Unit	Date of Shahadat	Place of Shahadat	NOK	
						Relation	No of Dependants
30.	Sep	Inam Ullah	"	03-7-09	Orakzai Agency	Mehar Angiz (Wife)	06
31.	Hav	Sher Muhammad	"	03-7-09	Orakzai Agency	Rawasia (Wife)	14
32.	Hav	Muhammad Rehman	"	25-11-09	Sadda Kurram Agency	Gulzaba Bibi (Wife)	11
33.	Sep	Pir Muhammad	"	12-12-09	Sadda Kurram Agency	Sabir Bibi (Wife)	02
34.	N/Sub	Asad Khan	"	12-12-09	Sadda Kurram Agency	Navida Bibi (Wife)	03
35.	Lnk	Mir Zaman	"	21-1-10	Kalaya Orakzai Agency	Iqbal Gula (Wife)	02
36.	Lnk	Nawazish Khan	"	30-9-10	Mandato Kando	Gohar Taja (Mother)	07
37.	Sep	Shaheen Shah	"	30-9-10	Mandato Kando	Asal Bibi (Mother)	06
38.	Sep	Dunya Khel	"	30-9-10	Mandato Kando	Zahira (Wife)	08
39.	N/Sub	Samar Jan	"	19-8-11	Tari Mangal Kurram Agency	Basreen Bibi (Wife)	10

Ser	Rank	Name	Unit	Date of Shahadat	Place of Shahadat	NOK	
						Relation	No of Dependants
40.	N/Sub	Muhammad Ibrahin	“	19-8-11	Tari Mangal Kurram Agency	Taji Bibi (Wife)	09
41.	Hav	Shah Nawaz	“	19-8-11	Tari Mangal Kurram Agency	Bakht Zari (Wife)	08
42.	Lnk	Rasheed Khan	“	17-2-12	Kyber Agency	Mashrang a (Wife)	03
43.	Hav	Muhammad Ayeen	“	31-12-09	Tari Mangal Kurram Agency	Ishrat Jehan (wife)	11
44.	Sep	Shahid Mehmood	“	6-3-10	Pashu Gar Post Kurram Agency	Raiz Begum (Mother)	02
45.	Sep	Wasif Khan	“	28-4-10	Sadda Colony Kurram Agency	Islam Bibi (Wife)	10
46.	Sep	Ajab Khan	Kurram Militia	12-7-10	Qaid Post Kurram Agency	Zarina Bibi (Wife)	03
47.	Hav	Zaffar Ullah	“	7-7-10	Junaid Post HQ Central Kurram	Lal Marjana (Wife)	05
48.	Hav	Subhan Ullah Jan	“	31-3-11	Langar Pqt Parachinar	Saima (Wife)	09

Ser	Rank	Name	Unit	Date of Shahadat	Place of Shahadat	NOK	
						Relation	No of Dependants
					Kurram Agency		
49.	Sep	Muhammad Yousuf	"	10-5-12	SOG-3 Mira Sar Khyber Agency	Asifa Perveen (Wife)	11
50.	Sep	Asif Shah	"	22-3-13	Orakzai Agency	Nusrat Parveen (Wife)	12

RANKWISE SUMMARY (IN TOTAL)

Ser	Rank	No of shaheed	NOK		Brothers
			Parents	Wife	
1.	SM	-	-	-	-
2.	Sub	02	-	02	03
3.	N/Sub	04	-	04	18
4.	Hav	07	-	07	15
5.	Nk	02	-	02	02
6.	Lnk	11	02	09	25
7.	Sep	24	05	19	66
Total:-		50	7	43	129

